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WAYS TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Addresses to the Students of Carmarthen College

BY

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IN MEMORIAM

OF

WALTER J. EVANS, M.A.

Bene qui latuit, bene vixit.

PREFACE

For over a quarter of a century the duty has fallen to me of having to preside at the annual proceedings that mark the close of each session at the Presbyterian College, Carmarthen, and of speaking particularly to those of the students who were about to enter upon the vocation of the Christian ministry. Naturally the subjects upon which on these occasions I chose to dwell were subjects pertaining to religious thought and religious experience. In response to numerous requests both from those who heard the Addresses and from others who read reports of them, I have been induced, at length, to offer the selection contained in this volume to a wider circle than that for which they were originally intended. On reading through what I have now put together, I am painfully conscious that certain trends of thought tend to recur, and I can only hope that the repetition will not be found to be of an obtrusive character. For obvious reasons, I have, with one exception, omitted the Addresses given during the years of the war. And, in each case, I have omitted also a preliminary section which was concerned specially with the work of the session.

The little College in Carmarthen is a continuation of the Academy that was founded in the seventeenth century by Samuel Jones, who was for some time Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, and one of the two thousand ejected ministers of 1662. Its connexion with the Presbyterian Board in London, which has always been an intimate one, can be traced back to the institution of the Presbyterian Fund in 1689. As a school of liberal theology, the College has made a point of imposing no doctrinal tests upon either its teachers or its students. The teaching staff has invariably comprised men of differing theological persuasions; and the students have not only been drawn from various denominations of Christendom, but have, with few exceptions, gone forth to serve the denominations from which they came.

My visits to Carmarthen began in 1898; and since 1900 I have each year given the Address to the retiring students. Certainly, if there was one reason stronger than any other which impelled me, in the midst of a busy academic life, to preserve this succession of visits unbroken, it was the esteem and admiration I had come to feel for the remarkable man who was at the head of the institution. In the last of these Addresses I have spoken of him in a manner in which it was possible to speak to a gathering composed mainly of his personal friends and former pupils. But it is, perhaps, permissible here to add a few words that were not necessary there.

Walter Jenkin Evans was born in Carmarthen

in 1856. His father, Titus Evans, was a minister and schoolmaster of considerable reputation, and his mother was a daughter of John Jeremy, a well-known minister in Lampeter. In 1864 his father died; and, after being for some time at a preparatory school, Walter Evans was sent to the Carmarthen Grammar School (one of the Foundations that date from the days of Queen Elizabeth); and in 1870, when only fourteen years of age, he entered the Presbyterian College, it being the wish of his mother that he should become a minister. In 1873 he obtained a classical scholarship at Jesus College, Oxford, and in due course graduated at the University. After spending a short interval at Göttingen, he proceeded as a theological student to Manchester New College, then in London, in the days of Dr. Martineau's Principalship. Largely on account probably of the shrinking he always felt from speaking in public, he gradually arrived at the decision that the ministry was not his appropriate sphere of labour, and determined to follow the teaching profession. For some five years he served as a master in schools in Brighton and London, until in 1884 he was summoned back to the Presbyterian College as tutor in Classics. And when, in 1888, Dr. Vance Smith retired from the Principalship, he was chosen to succeed that well-known scholar, his rare aptitude for administrative duties having already become manifest. In the same year he married the only daughter of Mr. S. S. Curtis of Upper Clapton and Leadenhall Street, and there thus began what was for

him a home life of singular contentment and felicity. Their residence, Green Hill, delightfully situated on the slope of Penlan, in the outskirts of the town, and commanding an extensive view of the beautiful Vale of Towy, seemed admirably in accord with their simple tastes and enjoyments. They had a son, now Major Stuart Evans, and two daughters.

For a period of just on forty years Walter Evans presided over the destinies of the College, continuing himself to be responsible for the classical subjects, which he would never suffer to sink into the background. It was a period, I need hardly say, momentous in the history of Welsh education. The University of Wales obtained its Charter in 1893; and no one had been more assiduous, in a quiet and unobtrusive way, in bringing about that result than the Carmarthen Principal. He drew up a set of "Proposals," which, although not adopted in their entirety, provided precisely what was needed as a basis for discussion, and were in the opinion of many peculiarly well adapted to the special conditions of Wales. An article of his in one of the numbers of *The Welsh Review* for 1892, pleading for the inclusion of a Theological Faculty which should be wholly unsectarian in its constitution, awakened widespread interest, and Wales happily in this respect set an example which has since been followed in several of the newer Universities. No sooner had the University been established than Principal Evans threw himself into the task of the organisation of

its studies and of framing its methods of administration. Later he was for some time Chairman of its Theological Board and Dean of its Faculty of Theology. He won the confidence of his colleagues not only by his sane and well-balanced judgment, but above all by his scrupulous fairness and freedom from prejudice. He was, of course, especially anxious to see his own college brought up to the standard required for affiliation with the University; and it was to him a source of great gratification when, owing largely to his own unremitting exertions, this was accomplished in 1902.

But the activities of Principal Evans were not confined to academic matters. As Chairman of the local School Board, he led the movement which provided Carmarthen with its fine elementary school; and on the Governing Body of the County School he did invaluable service. On the Town Council, he at once attained a position of prominence; as Chairman of the Literary and Scientific Institute of the district, his well-considered criticism invariably carried weight; and as a Commissioner of the Land Tax and a Justice of the Peace, his transparent impartiality was universally respected.

Yet, in the midst of these incessant calls upon his time, he never permitted his scholarship to languish or to grow rusty. His knowledge of the classical languages and literature was wide and thorough; and, I imagine, few of his contemporaries had a deeper acquaintance than he had with the niceties of Latin poetry. Latin scholars

tell me that no Latinist who is mindful of his reputation will venture to make public any speculations in which he may have indulged upon alliteration in Latin verse. But want of courage was never a failing of Walter Evans, and in a carefully compiled volume, published in 1921,[1] he propounded the view that the Roman poets had obeyed laws similar to those which he found exemplified in the bardic technique of his native Welsh tongue. It was a book addressed to specialists, and its author recognised that "such of them as are moved to pursue the investigation can hardly fail to improve on the work of a first adventurer." Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly a bold attempt to throw light upon an extraordinarily intricate problem; and, whatever the final verdict on its main thesis may be, it is entitled to rank as a permanent contribution to classical scholarship.

Of Principal Evans' striking and lovable personality, so modest and unassuming, and at the same time so firm and unyielding wherever what he took to be a matter of principle was at stake, I have spoken in the concluding Address, delivered shortly after his death, which occurred on February 10th, 1927. I will only add here one further remark. "It has always appeared to me," Mr. Gladstone writes in a letter of his which has happily been preserved, "that the love of justice is one of the rarest of all good qualities, I mean the love of it with full and commanding strength.

[1] *Allitteratio Latina, or Alliteration in Latin Verse.* London: Williams & Norgate.

I should almost dare to say that there are five generous men for one just man. The beauty of justice is the beauty of simple form: the beauty of generosity is heightened with colour and every accessory, but they always tend to divert from justice. The man who strongly loves justice must love it for its own sake, and such a love makes of itself a character of simple grandeur to which it is hard to find an equal." Such a character belonged in literal truth to him with whose name I deem it an honour and a privilege to associate a small book, which he was constantly expressing a desire to see in print.

G. Dawes Hicks.

April 1928.

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WAYS TOWARDS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

I

THE VOCATION OF THE SCHOLAR

ACADEMIC institutions such as this owe, I suppose, their origin, in the long run, to that event which is answerable for so many of the evils with which the human race is afflicted—namely, the beguilement of Eve and the fall of her husband. "Had Adam remained in Paradise, there would have been no anatomy and no metaphysics"—so runs the well-known dictum of Carlyle. And he proceeds to show that the various pursuits in which you have been engaged—theology, philosophy, ethics, and the rest—are so many symptoms of mental disease, which would never distract our peace of soul were we not the victims of spiritual infirmity and intellectual dyspepsia. Just as the healthy body performs its functions unconsciously, and makes no announcement of its nerves and digestive apparatus, that only force themselves to the front when they are not what they should be, so the healthy soul goes about its business instinctively, without troubling itself about the

methods of its working or the reasons of its activity, which only obtrude when the mind is out of order. And so, too, the religion that begins to talk about its proofs and to inquire into its credentials has already lost its vitality and contracted a sickness likely to end in decay and death.

According, then, to this view of the matter, your *alma mater* has been for you a sorry parent, for instead of nurturing your strength she has been instrumental in undermining your constitutions, and the Principal with his colleagues has been devoting himself to the dismal task of equipping a band of invalids to let loose upon an innocent world. Yet, notwithstanding the voice of warning to which I have alluded, I venture to assert that we have reason to be devoutly grateful to the sinning mother of all flesh for her courageous act of disobedience, and for having transmitted to her offspring a desire for the taste of the fruit of that tree which bears the hallowed name of knowledge. I make no doubt that that deed of hers is responsible for what is often a mental stress and strain that can hardly be called a state of happiness. But then I am reminded of another dictum of Carlyle's to the effect that there is no act of legislature, laid down by the nature of things, ordaining that we insignificant bipeds should be happy, that, in point of fact, man's unhappiness comes from his greatness, which is admitted to consist precisely in that hunger and thirst for knowledge that in another connexion our modern prophet derides. And if it be alleged that the teachers here have been but instructing

you how to sew fig-leaves together in order to conceal your intellectual nakedness, why, then, I thank Carlyle for having himself provided me with the brief that shall serve for their defence,—this, namely, that clothes, which began "in foolishest love of ornament," have come in the course of ages to possess an almost "omnipotent virtue," to be "symbols and emblems of the divine," and that the craft of the tailor, to which we are told all poets and moral teachers belong, is now one of unspeakable dignity and significance.

But, I take it, the work you have been doing here has long since led you to the conviction that the condition of unreflective, more or less blind, implicit faith is not and cannot be the final attitude of mind in reference to the principles it is customary to call religious. The instinctive trust of early years, the fervid enthusiasm of eager youth to throw itself into the service of causes it deems right and to do battle with evil and wrong, is after all but a provisional stage; he who remains in it is, at the best, only at the beginning of the soul's growth, the deeper and wider meaning of the ideals he has cherished lies as yet beyond his ken. For one who is to be a religious leader and guide more certainly is requisite. His religion may be beautiful, but men will ask if it is true; and he who can merely reiterate traditional beliefs and ancient dogmas, without having first turned them inside out to test their validity, is bound sooner or later to discover that his message is devoid of vitality and is apt to fade away with the words that bear it. For the dwellers even in rural districts have in

these days left far behind the innocence of those who peopled "sweet Auburn" as Goldsmith knew it before it was "deserted"; the "village master" has "taught his little school" to some purpose; so that, go where you will, you will have to speak to a generation of men and women not altogether ignorant of the stupendous facts which modern science has brought to light, nor of "the best which has been thought and said in the world." And if you are to intrepret for them, awakened ever so little by the newer culture, what you take to be momentous truths of the spiritual life, and in a way that will be helpful to them, you must know more of the strength of religion than its severest critics can allege of its weakness, and be able to convince by the reasonableness of your plea minds that are often troubled by doubts and perplexed with difficulties,—doubts and difficulties, be it said, which are not the vagaries of the thoughtless, but the inevitable attendants of the meditations of the thoughtful.

It is to provide the equipment needful for so onerous a calling that this College exists and its curriculum has been framed. You were led hither, I will assume, by some such instinctive persuasion of the truth of divine things as that of which I have spoken, and by a yearning to be witnesses of them to others. And those who here have been directing your work have been largely occupied in trying to convert that instinctive persuasion into clear intellectual conviction; and, by submitting your early beliefs to the scrutiny of critical inspection, to separate

out of their mixed content that which is crude and drosslike and that which is valuable and precious. They have been striving to impart what Plato finely described as " the first and fairest thing that the best of men can ever have," education of soul. And thus to some extent, at any rate, you have been enabled to gain an outlook upon a realm that is truly immense—the realm of nature and of nature's wondrous order and regularity, the realm of human experience, of the vast tracks of human history and of the ideas of the men who have made them memorable, the realm of religious experience, to which in the course of ages new and ampler vistas of divine realities have gradually been opening out.

In short, you have been living here, in a humble measure, the life of the scholar, and that life is not one that you will suffer to terminate with change of scene or change of occupation. In the being of each one of you who has really been participating in it, its influence will continue and form an essential part of the personality which I hope and believe is destined to exert useful and efficient activity in the sphere of public service. If, then, I can suggest in what I have further to say some of the links of connexion between the life of the college student and that of the public worker, I shall not perhaps have turned my time to ill account.

Rarely, I think, has the true character and spirit of the scholar's vocation been delineated in language that will appeal so directly to those who are modestly striving to make that vocation

theirs as in the admirable Address which Mr. Haldane[1] delivered to the students of the University of Edinburgh a short while ago. Mr. Haldane showed how naturally and inevitably the scholar's life must be a "dedicated life," a life, that is to say, which with all its strength is consecrated to a chosen aim, to some high and noble purpose. Such concentration, such devotion, meant of necessity renunciation of much that the world usually reckons the chief objects of ambition. Pleasure, amusement, riches, prosperity—these things must not be allowed to intervene between the scholar and his quest, or to turn his energies from that to which he has consecrated his powers. Truth is a jealous mistress and will admit into her sanctuary only those who are prepared to give her a whole-hearted allegiance. He who would really live in the spirit of the classics must toil hard to attain that sense of easy mastery of the classical languages which is vital to his endeavour. The student of philosophy must ponder over and think of little else than philosophical themes, before he can get rid of the habit of unconsciously applying to his subject-matter notions which are wholly inadequate and misleading. The theologian must labour long and devotedly, if he is ever to acquire that breadth of mind and largeness of view which will prevent him confusing the laws of the spiritual universe with the narrow creeds and provincialisms of sectarian propaganda. The lives of all great men had been thus dedicated;

[1] Now Viscount Haldane of Cloan. I was speaking in June 1907.

singleness of purpose had dominated them throughout. Thus it had been with the life of a Socrates, a Spinoza, or a Newton; and thus it was, we may add, with the lives of such men as Chalmers, Dale, Lightfoot, and of him, without whom the world is poorer to-day, John Watson. And, as it is with the finished scholar, so it is even with the beginner. Subject to the same temptations, apt to be deflected by the same tendencies, he too must live for his work, and, so far as can be, for that alone, if he is ever to become proficient in his calling; he too must train himself away from the idea of spending much time upon things disconnected with his pursuits, if the all too short years of college discipline are not to be spent in vain. And then Mr. Haldane went on to describe how right loyally the sons of his native Scotland were responding to the appeal. In words that I venture to claim are as true of Wales as they are of Scotland, he told the story—the familiar story—of the way in which young men and women of humble parentage and with no material advantages went up to the centres of science and learning, animated by the one desire for knowledge and mental enlightenment. Riches were not theirs, and many a bitter struggle had been gone through before they had so much as crossed the threshold of their *alma mater*. And, once there, they were content with the barest necessities of existence, and neither asked for luxuries nor lamented their absence. It was upon youth of that calibre that the future of the country depended; that was the type of manhood from the heart of which great

things would come. In olden days, Plato tried to combine in his scheme of education something of the severity of the Spartan barrack-room with the grace and refinement of Athenian culture. The Platonic ideal was, to a certain extent at least, revived again in Mr. Haldane's description of the true scholar's life, and has been, I venture to believe, partially realised in not a few of those who have been studying on the banks of the Towy.

Parnassus is, then, no easy hill to climb, and, as you pause to-day on one ridge of the ascent, you may well seek to justify your persistence by trying to estimate the value of some of the fruits which you have been gathering and which have made it worth while to toil.

I am inclined to think that one of the most precious of the results to be got from college life is that which springs from just that Spartan-like discipline to which I have been referring. It is a tremendous step in the growth of a human soul when it comes to realise that there are things in life of vastly greater import than the wealth and comfort and material rewards in terms of which the success or failure of a man's career is so often reckoned. It is a splendid power to attain—that, namely, of deliberately renouncing the race after silver or gold and to spend the strength that might be used in their acquisition in the quiet, earnest, conscientious pursuit of those thoughts and ideas and inspirations which are usually supposed to be such intangible and unsubstantial possessions. It is a lofty point of view to gain—that of being able to banish from one's conscious-

ness the merely pecuniary considerations so prevalent in the world around us, and to judge of what is worthy and good by an altogether higher standard. Now, it may be possible—it often is possible—for the single, unaided intellect to reach this altitude of spiritual independence for itself, but it is tenfold easier for the members of a corporation or brotherhood to reach it in common, if they but band themselves together with that end in view. For there ought to pervade such a community what we may vaguely call an atmosphere, a way of looking at things and feeling about them, a kind of contagious agreement as to which features in life are great and which small, which high and which low, a sort of instinctive but unmistakable resolve to seek after those things which are from above, which means in itself an education and a culture of which it would be impossible to overestimate the value. If this, or anything like this, has characterised the comradeship of this little college, if it has been penetrated by this spirit of mutual helpfulness in the joint search after the true, the beautiful, and the good, then those who have participated in it have been subject to a discipline than which none more invigorating could be devised by the wit of man.

Again, looking more specially to the various intellectual interests of this place, let me emphasise the fact that it would be a very inadequate and misleading view of the work which has been done were we to judge it merely by the number of things we have been able to extract from the students in the form of answers to

examination questions. It is easy, if you are blessed with a good memory, to cram the mind with a host of details, with a multitude of detached items, the possession of which will astonish the ignorant and even please the heart of an examiner. But a good memory does not constitute a thinker, any more than a dictionary constitutes a work of literature, or a catalogue a gallery of art. It would be a poor result of college teaching to flood the world with walking dictionaries and talking catalogues. Culture does not consist in the mere piling up of impressions, in the mere passive reception of ideas, to be stored somehow in the mind as furniture in a lumber-room. It is not mere addition to our knowledge, not mere instruction—useful though these may be—that constitute the main objects of mental training. There are hundreds of people who abound in curious and entertaining information concerning men and things, who can supply you at a moment's notice with the date of Napoleon's birth and the names of the constellations, but that does not indicate that they are necessarily persons of culture and education. Cardinal Newman once drew the picture of certain seafaring men, who range from one end of the earth to another, but for whom the multiplicity of external objects, which they have encountered, forms no symmetrical and consistent picture for their imagination. They see, as he puts it, the tapestry of human life on the wrong side, and it tells no story. "They sleep, and they rise up, and they find themselves, now in Europe, now in Asia;

they see visions of great cities and wild regions; they are in the marts of commerce, or amid the islands of the South; they gaze on Pompey's Pillar, or on the Andes; and nothing which meets them carries them forward or backward, to any idea beyond itself. Every thing comes and goes in its turn, like the shifting scenes of a show, which leave the spectator where he was." No one who knew what he was talking about would ascribe to such a man education or culture. That only deserves the name which confers the power of grasping a multiplicity of particulars in the unity of one whole, and of referring them severally to their right positions in the vast system of reality, of appreciating their true significance or insignificance in the light of comprehensive principle. Every great intellect, in the history of humanity, the intellect, say, of an Augustine, a Dante, a Shakespeare, or a Goethe, has been an intellect of this nature—an intellect, namely, that is able to take a wide and connected view of the world and human life, of things old and new, of the present and the past, and to see the influence of these on one another in such a way as to apprehend them in their due relations and proportions. Now, it is some such breadth of intellectual vision that I would hope has, in however slight a measure, been awakened in the minds of those who have been pursuing here together the sacred quest of truth. Here I trust the power has been gained of rising above mere text-book information, and of securing a high mountain view; the power of mastering the information you have won and

of not letting it master you; the power of using it with ease and discernment, instead of being crushed by it as a ponderous and oppressive load. I should like to think that no one will leave these walls without something of the perspective of the genuine thinker as well as the weight of the patient scholar's learning, so that you will never make the mistake of interpreting the universe by its small details, instead of its large principles, or of so inverting the order of things as to attempt to explain the living by the dead, or the ideals of the mind by the wants of the body.

And, believe me, it is this kind of culture and enlightenment for which there is crying need in the world to-day, and which alone can be of avail in dealing with the momentous issues that are now confronting our humanity. As those of you who are entering upon the active work of the ministry will soon discover, we are at present face to face with a variety of problems the magnitude of which we are only slowly coming to realise, and for the solution of which none but large and broad-minded culture, of the kind I have been trying to indicate, will be in the least degree sufficient.

We are face to face, for example, with a considerable social movement that is aiming at the elevation and regeneration of the toiling millions of our native land. It is animated for the most part by generous and lofty motives, by a real desire for justice and the advancement of human weal. But it requires light as well as heat to direct it along the right road; it requires wisdom as well

as enthusiasm to lead it onwards to victory. It is not alone for party leaders, or political clubs, or conflicting caucuses to deal with the relations of employers and employed, with the demands of trades unions, with the rate of wages of men and women, or with the education of children. We want here the help of trained intellect and rational insight. We want here the help of students, students of history and of human nature, who have thought out and grasped fundamental principles of equity and morality, who can be at once far-sighted and sympathetic, and who can bring their knowledge and good feeling to bear in furthering the latest and ripest appeals of justice and humanity.

We are face to face, further, with no small crisis in religious thought and life. All around us there is a yearning for nobler conceptions of God, and worthier conceptions of man, and of man's place in Nature. It is not that religion is in any way losing its hold upon the minds and hearts of our countrymen, or that they are ceasing to feel interest in the momentous issues with which religion is concerned. Quite the contrary. Had you been going out into the ministry twenty years ago, there would have been some justification then for saying that you would have to encounter a large amount of indifferentism and scepticism in all circles of society. But that is far less the case to-day. We have witnessed recently, from one end of the country to the other, a significant revival of interest in and reflection upon religious themes, and you cannot visit any of the large towns of Britain without realising how genuine

and sincere is the desire to attain satisfying and consistent ideas upon the undying principles of religious reflexion and belief. But the antiquated notions of an anthropomorphic God, stationed outside the universe some millions of miles away, of the Fall of man, and of the vicarious sacrifice of the virtuous for the guilty, of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, and the like, are losing, and will continue to lose, the assent of men and women who have come to see that they are incompatible with what philosophy and history can reveal to us of the divine nature and the human. Men and women everywhere are coming to feel with our English poet:—

> "O streaming worlds, O crowded sky,
> O Life, and mine own soul's abyss,
> Myself am scarce so small that I
> Should bow to Deity like this!"

That is the true meaning of the movement of which, under the name of the New Theology, we have heard so much lately, and it is the true meaning of numbers of other movements also, the nature of which you will soon discover in your work as Christian ministers. Now, here, again, in this crisis, it is only the man of trained scholarship, of large intellectual horizon, of broad-minded tolerance, of heart-felt sympathy, that can be of real help and service to anxious and inquiring minds. We need men who are ready to give their best thought and reflexion to the consideration of these and kindred problems of such vital concern for the human race. We want men

so impregnated with the spirit of religion, so imbued with the great ideas and principles that lie at its very basis, and which are of vastly greater import than all the small doctrines that have gathered round them, as never to be afraid of the truth, never to have the least suspicion that what is true can in the smallest degree impede or injure what is good or holy or divine. "Let truth and error grapple," as Milton said. "Whoever knew truth put to the worse in a fair and open encounter?"

Unless, then, the minister's vocation is to involve an earnest manly endeavour to comprehend, so far as may be, the truths of the spiritual world, unless his life is, in the sense I have indicated, to be a "dedicated life," I do not understand what function the ministry has to fulfil in the complex conditions of our present-day civilisation. When, however, I have regard to the kind of notion that is frequently prevalent as to the mission of a church or a chapel, so far from being surprised that the supply of recruits for the ministry is diminishing, I sometimes wonder how it comes about that intelligent young men are to be found ready to give themselves to the work of the ministry at all. If the time of a minister is to be absorbed in getting up entertainments and arranging for tea-parties and soirees, if it is to be essential that he shall provide attractions in his schoolroom to vie with the performances of the music-hall, if his days are to be mortgaged in making professional calls upon first one and then the other of his parishioners in regular routine, then I submit that there is not

enough in such a programme to induce a man to devote to it the efforts and the energies of a life-time. A human life is of more worth than to be frittered away upon trivialities such as these—trivialities which become insipid and noxious when they are put into the position of things of the first rank. If the choice were forced upon me, I declare, without a moment's hesitation, that I would rather spend my strength upon the far more important task of making shoes, or building houses, or tilling fields, engaged in which I could, at any rate, be assured that I was doing something useful to earn my daily bread, and might gain in the end the comfort of knowing that my life had been of some benefit to the community.

I was referring at the beginning to certain dicta of Carlyle's. *Sartor Resartus* is not, I am afraid, read and devoured by the men of your generation as it was by the men of mine, but there is an utterance of Teufelsdröckh's with which, in this connexion, you ought to be familiar. "Two men," he is made to say, "I honour, and no third. First, the toilworn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard Hand; crooked, coarse; wherein notwithstanding lies a cunning virtue, indefeasibly royal, as of the Sceptre of this Planet. Venerable too is the rugged face, all weather-tanned, besoiled, with its rude intelligence; for it is the face of a Man living manlike. . . . A second man I honour, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not

daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavouring towards inward Harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one: when we can name him Artist; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven-made Implement conquers Heaven for us! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality?—These two, in all their degrees, I honour; all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth."

You and I, each in our respective spheres, have deliberately chosen this second mode of service; let us see to it that we carry out faithfully and well the charge which thus devolves upon us. If we are to offer to others the "bread of Life," we must first of all win that bread by the honest manly toil of our own heads and brains. Some little plot of the spiritual vineyard we must cultivate with zealous care and gather its fruits, before we can offer these to others. Some truths divine we must so have reflected on and pondered over and cherished, so assimilated into our trends of thought and feeling, that men may recognise when we speak of them we are speaking as those who have authority and not as the scribes. And that we can only do by remaining students all our days; by resolving that, come what may, we will reserve for ourselves opportunities of becoming

acquainted at first hand with the vast themes in regard to which we are expected to be guides for our fellows. Men and women, confronted with the momentous issues of life and death, are looking to us for thoughts and ideas and ideals, that may be to them grounds of hope and reliance, as they wend their way on earth from youth to old age. Let us not offer to those who are thus depending on us for spiritual food that which has cost us nothing. Wisdom in the days of Solomon lifted up her voice in the streets and was not heard. And that is even so now; the streets have never been the place for wisdom. Wisdom is the outcome only of calm thought and earnest reflexion; the streets are beset with bustle and hurry and turmoil. Withdraw, then, from them, not intermittently but frequently and regularly, into the quietude which is the absolute requisite of the thinker. And, while thus for yourselves patiently seeking truth, keep in close touch with the wisdom and reverence of the human centuries; catch the accents of those who in reason and in love have stood nearer to the heart of things than you alone can do; breathe yourselves and bring to your people something of their purer air; and you will not fail, once again, to dispel the popular delusion that a scholar among men cannot be a prophet of the living God.

II

THE WORTH OF HUMAN PERSONALITIES

Once more it falls to my lot to greet you on the conclusion of a year's work, and I do so with a feeling that has not grown conventional through the lapse of time. I may come to you now, I trust, no longer merely as an "external examiner," but as a friend and fellow-worker, as one who has experienced many of your difficulties, and has had to struggle through them, and who can thus share with you the thoughts and aspirations of this hour. For the moment, however, it is fitting that I should have mainly in mind the men who are to-day bidding farewell to the college class-room and are about to enter upon the active duties of their calling. They are to be ministers of religion, and in that capacity to spend themselves and to be spent in the service of their fellows.

And for what I have to say, my point of departure shall be that religion is from first to last pre-eminently concerned with the interests and well-being of man. Wherever the strain and stress of life are making themselves felt, wherever earnest thought and moral endeavour are evincing themselves, wherever trial and temptation are weighing human spirits down,

there religion should come with its message of trust and hope and inspiration. The main function of religion is to elevate and sweeten daily life, to transform character into ever nobler and purer forms, to raise the human soul to a consciousness of the reality of that Divine Spirit in whom we all live and move and have our being.

Perhaps we hardly recognise how much we owe to the positivists for the persistent and unwearied way in which they have striven to make us realise the tremendous significance that belongs to the human race in the scheme of things. While physical science has been constantly tending in these latter days to dwarf man's spirit by thrusting upon it the immensities of the material universe, the positivists have clearly seen that however vast the realms of space may be, and however minute this small globe may appear by comparison, yet the existence on it of millions of human beings is no mere accident, no mere by-product of evolution, but a fact of stupendous import, let the dimensions of stellar regions be as immeasurable as they may. "I would rather have an hour's sympathy with one noble heart than read the law of gravitation through and through," was the confession of a mind of whose sincerity there can be at least no question. And when Kant, in a moment of intense self-scrutiny, declared that two things filled him with awe—the starry heavens and the sense of moral responsibility in man, he at any rate was under no misapprehension, but well knew that the splendour of the former in no way dimmed or overshadowed the intrinsic

dignity of the latter. Nay, is it not one of the fatal delusions to which the merely discursive intellect is liable that leads us to pit these realities over against each other at all? For they are not in truth commensurable. Even the omniscient God cannot persuade the planets to revolve round the sun by convincing them of the categorical imperative, nor on the other hand can the united forces of the huge mechanism of nature prevail upon a Luther to deviate one hair's breadth from his purpose as he stands before the Diet of Worms. View them how you will, matter and soul belong to different planes of being, and there is no common measure which you can bring to bear equally upon both. He who is tempted to think or speak disparagingly of the human species because of the little room it occupies in the vast dimensions of the material universe is on a par with the man who sneers at patriotism, and will not hear of England's greatness, because our tiny island is such a dot on the map of the world. It is a species of mental blindness, that, by which I fear we are all at times afflicted; and, for my part, I am grateful to the positivists for the pertinacity and courage with which they, not, indeed, alone, but still with characteristically deliberate aim, have tried to clear that blindness away.

I recall, for example, the significant protest of Mr. Frederic Harrison against the pantheism that would absorb the lives of us all into the lifeless whole of what it calls "the cosmos"; and I find in his words the basis for a faith wider, indeed, in its range than any which he himself would

have sanctioned. "There lies," he says, "in the heart of the poorest and meanest child a potency that cannot be even stated in terms of the deepest philosophy of the physical universe. Whilst one mother struggling to save one child were left on this mere fleck of dust in the countless procession of the suns, the devotion of that poor creature to her offspring, the love and trust of the child for the protecting parent, have a deeper religious meaning than all the music of the spheres, or the mystery of cosmic forces. There, where these two are cowering together in trust and love, there are still life for others, labour for others, endurance for the sake of something not our own, a sense of reverence and gratitude for protection, conquering pain and leaping over death." Deep and profound is the truth embodied in these glowing words.

Having, however, said that, I am bound to add that it is a truth which seems to me to be often lost from view in Mr. Harrison's presentations of the ideal which he would offer as a substitute for the conception of the Divine. Inspiration and encouragement are no doubt to be obtained from the thought of humanity, conceived as the collective spirit, so to speak, of that which has been precious and elevating in the intellectual, moral, and religious life of the myriads who from the dawn of history have contributed to human knowledge and goodness, a spirit enveloping each of us as an atmosphere, assimilated with and transmuted into the very tissue of our social being, and claiming from us in return the fruits

of our industry, our helpfulness, our rectitude. "In some infinitesimal degree," we are assured, "the humblest life that ever turned a sod sends a wave—nay, more than a wave—through the ever-growing harmony of human society. Not a soldier died at Marathon or Salamis but did a stroke by which our thought is enlarged, and our standard of duty formed, to this day." Be it so. Certainly no word of mine shall minimise or call in question what is thus maintained. I would fain believe that the light and sweetness and beauty of every true and saintly soul are beyond the power of time and change to touch or tarnish, and that in the way just indicated they are preserved as lasting influences even here on earth. But when I am further told, as by the founder of positivism, that "the individual man is a mere abstraction, and that there is nothing real but humanity," then I find myself in complete and thorough disagreement. Whilst repudiating the individualism according to which persons are conceived as so many isolated, independent units, whilst recognising to the full that each one of us only becomes himself in proportion as by work and thought and love he gradually makes the larger life of others his own, I would yet insist, and insist in the strongest manner, that humanity as such is a pure abstraction, and has no real significance, save in and through the individual lives and souls and characters that are manifestations of it. In a sense, indeed, we are, as Mr. Harrison is fond of calling us, children of humanity, but then the life of humanity is, as

Goethe said of the life of nature, in her children, and apart from them the mother is not. It has become customary amongst certain writers to speak of humanity as an actual living personality, endowed with consciousness and will, of which individuals are but the specialised organs. Yet such a mode of expression is, I venture to think, altogether confusing and misleading. Just as there can be no thought without thinkers, no speech without speakers, and no love without lovers, so there can be no humanity without men. Humanity lives only in the lives and experiences of individual souls; it has a permanent meaning in so far as it is transmitted from mind to mind, and becomes incorporated in the various organisations and institutions of social progress. But there is no distinct and separate entity called Humanity standing over against us human beings as a "Great Being" that endures and abides, whilst we are born and pass away. So conceived, humanity becomes cold and ghost-like as the dreariest pantheistic "cosmos"; and, indeed, precisely after the manner of the latter, from which it was to rescue us, it absorbs us all in its chill embrace, and makes us the prey of bloodless categories.

By our habitual modes of thought and language we are, in fact, perpetually tempted to fall into the error of which I have been speaking. The tendency of our social conditions is to form men and women according to one pattern, to restrain in them anything that is original or characteristic, to stifle and repress genuine individuality.

Politics forces us to act with our party, and stigmatises as a renegade the man who dares to utter an independent opinion of his own. Certain politicians would bring into subjection the aspirations of all to the will of one; others these into harmony with the will of many. Religious sects would fence round the sheep in their folds with stereotyped beliefs and dogmas, and let loose the dogs of heresy upon the luckless mortal who strays beyond. And is not the same largely true of our own personal dealings with our fellow-creatures? Most of us have, I suppose, a small band of relatives and friends, whom we know more or less intimately, whose inner being we to some extent appreciate and understand. But, for the rest, how superlatively slight is our affinity with the individuality of men! We group them in masses, we parcel them out in classes, we contemplate them much as we do the stones of a building or the waves of the sea. What do we mean, for instance, when we talk of the English people, and connect ourselves in kinship with a national life? Are we mindful of a confederation of millions of souls, each of whom is living his own life, experiencing his own feelings, working out his own destiny, and departing at length to exert his powers elsewhere? Far from it. For us the English people is one huge aggregate; we think of it, we speak of it, we write of it, as such, and in our blundering way of picturing it to ourselves we miss the central significance that ought to attach to the words we use. Does the statesman realise it when he is in charge of a measure that will

affect for good or ill the welfare of multitudes? Does the employer of labour realise it when he engages the hundreds of workers whose toil shall produce the article of commerce for which he is responsible to the market? Does even the minister of religion realise it when he is speaking, or should be, of those eternal verities that link our human spirits to the divine? One has only to ask such questions in order to drag to light the fallacy that so easily besets us. Through the fictitious personification of an abstraction we suffer a vital and fundamental truth pertaining to us as human beings to escape us—the truth, namely, of the unique, personal, individual character of every finite soul, and of the distinctive function that accrues to each in the spiritual community of the world. "So careful of the type we seem, so careless of the single life."

Ah, but here in this higher plane of being, the single life is the main and essential fact, the sole significance of the type is relative to and dependent upon it. As we advance from the realm of mechanism to the realm of spirit, we need to change wholly our method of treatment and interpretation. In dealing with physical phenomena, the scientist is justified, and indeed compelled, to proceed by the use of abstractions. Atoms for him are all very much alike, and, as moving and vibrating, the properties of untold millions of them can be represented in a concise mathematical formula. For Newton, suns and planets and falling apples vie with each other in illustrating the law of gravity; and, without any minute inquiry

into particulars, the law of gravity may be taken as scientifically accounting for the movements of them all. So it is throughout with reference to the physical universe; for the purposes of scientific explanation we may disregard the infinite multiplicity of detail, and concentrate attention only on the general features. Given the condition of the mechanism of nature at any one moment, its condition at any antecedent or subsequent moment is theoretically calculable; its continuous changes are all of them exemplifications of universal principles, and these known, there is little else of scientific interest to tell. But the case is otherwise when we pass to the world of minds, the world of history, the world of spiritual realities. There we find that individual lives, individual persons, individual events—the features corresponding to those which we have ignored in the sphere of mechanism—are the salient factors in the situation. For the historian, it is true, all individualities are not of equal importance; but the importance that accrues to any one of them is due not to its being a basis for sweeping inductions, not to any suggestion it may offer of a general law, but to the quite special and unique portraiture it enables him to draw of a particular inner life, of peculiar qualities, qualities of soul, which simply have no exact parallel, search for it where he will. Each personality in living its own life, in thinking its own thoughts, in experiencing its own affections, in cherishing its own admirations, and in fulfilling its own purposes, is a unique reality in history, and there is no second personality

that can be substituted for it. No finite being can actually be said to take the place of another; that place is the individual's own, a private inheritance in the commonwealth of souls. Nor does this hold only of the noted names of history. It is true no less of the countless lives that, with as little thought of earning gratitude as of emerging from obscurity, have been, all unknown to themselves, sources of unique spiritual influence. What depths of pure thought, what depths of tender affection, what depths of untiring goodness, have eluded the pen of the biographer, while records of more conspicuous but far less noble services have been handed down to fame! "The growing good of the world is," as George Eliot expressed it, "partly dependent on unhistoric acts, and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."

Herein, then, lies the sharp contrast to be drawn between the sphere of mechanism and the sphere of conscious spirits; the one can be understood in terms of abstract generalities, the other in terms only of the infinite richness and variety of its individual members. Whereas in the former we are concerned with what can be weighed and measured and tabulated, in the latter there comes before us, as of primary concern, a system of worths or values, to which these notions of quantity and number are inapplicable. The principle of the conservation of values, it has recently been insisted, is the fundamental axiom of religion.

By reference to that principle we may see once more the futility of the notion of Humanity regarded as an object of religious reverence and aspiration. In that bare abstraction, there can be no conservation of values. Individual souls, individual minds, individual characters, alone, in this sense, possess value, and if these be cast as rubbish to the void, then the values in question must, in the long run, perish with them, even though the Idea of Humanity preserve its timeless validity in some Platonic realm of being.

And now, at length, I have prepared the way for the message I bring to you to-day. As ministers of religion you are to be guides and inspirers of men, helpers in the rearing of human personalities, custodians of human values. For that high calling, human nature will be your chief study, and you will study it reverently and devotedly at first hand in the little circles in which your ministry will lie. There it will come before you in manifold and diverse forms—in the innocence and merriment of children, in the strenuousness and ardour of youth, in the busy industry and fond devotion of manhood and womanhood, in the calm serenity of old age. Commonplace things enough, do you say, and hardly sufficient material upon which to expend the energies of a vocation! Be not deceived; if what we have been insisting upon be true, there is nothing in all the world that is more pregnant with undying interest. Common in a sense these familar facts may be, but commonplace they assuredly are not. Behind them lie just the unique dramas, the unique

tragedies of which we have been speaking—the values and worths which give to human life its inexhaustible grace and dignity. Aspirations, ideals, voiceless prayers, joys, sorrows and loves the most profound, secrets the deepest, yearnings, and loneliness of heart, pathetic in its sadness, and yet majestic surely in its significance —all this and much more is there, and if you can but see it, and watch it and gently sympathise with it, you will have enough of eager, passionate interest to call forth all the resources of your thought and faith and courage. You need be envious, then, not even of those who stand foremost in the ranks of popularity, and whose names are on everybody's tongue. For you will be in close touch with what they, for the most part, behold only from a distance—some of the most significant incidents transacted below the skies. "Christ did not love humanity," declares a well-known modern author, "he never said he loved humanity; he loved men." Paradoxical as that dictum may sound, I believe it to be unreservedly true. The essential characteristic of the Christian gospel—that which distinguished it from any other that had been previously proclaimed—is not expressed in the phrase the "enthusiasm of humanity," but in the emphasis it laid upon the infinite worth and value of each individual soul. Christ saw that heaven was needed to complete the history of earth, because each finite soul had within it the capacity of contributing that to the wealth of existence without which the universe of reality would be incalculably

the poorer. The universe can spare, if needs be, the law of gravitation, but it cannot spare the love and affection of a single noble heart.

Plunged, then, into this work, so replete with untold possibilities, how are you going to meet its demands, and rise to the height of its opportunities? Avoid from the outset, I pray you, one fatal mistake into which you may all too readily fall. There are always in every church certain persons who will lend their suffrages to him who flatters them by defending their pet dogmas or sectarian proclivities. When men are clamouring about doctrines and creeds and articles, a cheap popularity may easily be won by espousing either the one side or the other. But it is a popularity that is dearly bought. These unseemly wrangles are bringing often the Christian Church into discredit, and preventing its ministers from grappling with the real problems of life. If you will but take the trouble to know men—to know them intimately and well—you will find that their most vital concern is not with questions of trinity or unity, not with questions of miracle or biblical infallibility, or the like, but with thoughts and ideals that constitute the substance and essence of what we mean by religion. "Believers in God," is the inarticulate cry that you may hear pressing upon you, "tell us of Him. Is there indeed an Omniscient Mind, guiding the course of events, or are we orphans in an alien universe, with no Eternal Love on which to lean? Have you really found an Over-soul, a living Intelligence, an

Almighty Father?" "Men of trust," is the cry again, "here are we toiling, suffering, dying; those who are dearest to us are slipping away from us in sickness to the grave; our home happiness is departing, death is making havoc amongst us, and hurrying us also to the tomb. Can you give us any assurance that this is not all, that we may look for light beyond this seeming darkness?" These are some of the actual realities you will be called upon to face, and unless you can bring earnest, sincere thought, patient reflection, and kindly sympathy here to bear, the main work of your lives will be left undone. Here in the quiet hours of college study, you have gained such preparatory training as it is possible to provide, and it remains for you to complete it now by first-hand acquaintance with the wants and longings and sorrows of men. Go to them, not as professional spiritual physicians to whom all doubt and misgiving and grief is very much of one kind, to whom those experiencing these things are only "cases" they have to attend to as part of their business. Go to them with real human discernment and feeling—with the feeling that can and will manifest itself if only it be there; go to them with that indefinable sympathy and love and considerateness which can penetrate into the very sanctuary of their hearts, and cause them to realise that you would help them to bear the anguish they may be called upon to endure, and yours will be a vocation blessed of men, and sanctified, I devoutly trust, by the approval of God.

Other fields of usefulness you may then indeed

enter, but never at the cost of neglecting that where you are bound by all the claims of loyalty to be ever at your post. Civic and political duties will crowd upon you, and in the strife of contending factions it may be often incumbent upon you to make your voice heard, and your carefully considered judgments known. Many social changes are impending, and to these it is impossible that you can remain indifferent. New conceptions, too, of national policy are in the air, and from the discussion of them there will be for you no standing aloof. But, as guardians of the higher worths and values of the human world, upon you the mission falls of convincing your fellow-citizens that there is a truer imperialism to strive for than what is sometimes dignified by that name.

"Here, while the tide of conquest rolls
Against the distant golden shore,
The starved and stunted human souls
Are with us more and more.

Vain is your Science, vain your Art,
Your triumphs and your glories vain,
To feed the hunger of their heart,
And famine of their brain.

Your savage deserts howling near,
Your wastes of ignorance, vice and shame,
Is there no room for victories here,
No field for deeds of fame?

Arise and conquer while you can
The foe that in your midst resides,
And build within the mind of man
The empire that abides."

III

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE AND THE MINISTRY OF RELIGION

THE fleeting terms of an academic career glide speedily along, and not a few of you have already taken down your last lecture notes and bidden farewell to the class-room and its round of duties. The curtain soon will rise upon a very different scene, and you will not be facing it with a light and easy mind. Here it has been your good fortune to occupy for a while the position of spectators of man's long history, of the civilisations he has founded, of the literatures he has produced, of the religions he has professed, of the ideals he has pursued, and of the hopes that have saved him from despair, and out of his very weakness have made him strong. To-morrow you yourselves will be actors in the great human drama; and scarcely will you leave this place ere what it has done for you will be put to the test, and it will be seen whether the student and the thinker can play the part of the man.

In more senses than one the change will mean and imply much. Here you have been largely occupied in calmly surveying ideas and beliefs and opinions by the dry light of reason and reflection—examining the grounds on which they rest, and the significance they rightly bear.

There you will encounter them either as actual factors in the inner life of the soul, suffused with ardent feeling and emotion, or, on the other hand, perhaps, as the lost ideals of those who are now indifferent, it may be antagonistic, to them. Here, again, you have been contemplating for the most part the select minds of our race—its prophets and saints and teachers to whom the things of the spirit have been the profoundest and most certain of all realities—

> "Souls temper'd with fire,
> Fervent, heroic, and good,
> Helpers and friends of mankind,"

and in their companionship the immensity of human trusts and aspirations has offered nothing that need either stagger faith or awaken fears of misgiving. There you will be plunged amongst the ordinary men and women of the world, forced by necessity to spend their time and strength in the ceaseless competition for the material means of subsistence, harassed by myriads of cares and anxieties, and for whom it is almost inevitable that the pursuit of gain should be ascendant over other interests and passions by which human life is stirred. What can you do for them that they cannot do for themselves? How can you bring into their existence that which will redeem it from absorption in the mere race for wealth or in the giddy whirl of sensuous pleasure and enjoyment?

There is an essay of Ruskin's which has always seemed to me one of his finest productions, and

it surprises me to find how comparatively few, even of those who know and appreciate his writings, are familiar with it. The essay I refer to is called "The Mystery of Life and its Arts," and in it Ruskin tells of the features that perplex and puzzle him as he ponders over his experience of the habitual thoughts and doings of the crowd of mortals. What strikes him most is the intense apathy he finds standing in the way of every ideal aim. There is, he insists, no making ourselves feel enough astonishment at this apathy. That the particular occupations or pastimes of life should have no underlying motive is perhaps understandable; but that life itself should have no motive, that men should neither care to find out what it may lead to nor guard against its being frittered away and dissipated into vacuity—that appeared to Ruskin an enigma indeed. If any one were told positively that a large estate had lately been left to him on some specific conditions, and that there was a chance of his losing it altogether if he did not find out on what terms he was to inherit it—would he not strain every nerve to ascertain the facts and to discover where the estate was and what it was like? Now, most persons in Christian countries outwardly profess to believe—and a large number unquestionably think they believe—much more than this—not only that a quite unlimited inheritance is in prospect for them if they fit themselves to be its owners, but that the precise contrary of such a possession is in store for them if they fail to satisfy the conditions prescribed for entrance into

the spiritual realms. And yet, exclaims Ruskin, there is not one in a thousand of these human souls that cares to reflect even for a moment where this estate is, or how beautiful it is, or what kind of life they are to lead in it, or what kind of life they must lead to obtain it. Can they answer a single straightforward question unflinchingly about the spiritual world? Are they sure there is a heaven? Sure there is a hell? Or, if not sure, do they so much as care to make sure? And, if not, how can anything they do be right, how can anything they think be wise? What honour can there be in the arts that amuse them, or what profit in the possessions that please? Is not this, he asks—this curious indifference and unconcern about the very meaning and purpose of conscious experience—a mystery, an almost baffling mystery, of life?

And more. Even though we be perhaps inclined to think it a beneficent ordinance for the generality of men that they are not impelled to dwell too anxiously or earnestly upon these questions of our life's purpose and destiny, since otherwise the business of the hour would not be done, still we might anticipate that those who set out to be their teachers and guides would address themselves in all seriousness to these supremely human problems, and allow themselves no peace until they had some definite message, some clear assurance, to offer to their fellows. But, as Ruskin passes in review many even of the greatest names in literature—Homer and Milton and Dante and Shakespeare,—it seems to him that when they come to deal

with themes about which there is need above all for absolute sincerity and clear unambiguous statement they resort to imagery and phantasm and undisguised fiction and artifice, and supply us with not a single fact that can be conceived as tenable by any living faith. "I tell you," declares Ruskin, "that as I strive more with this strange lethargy and trance in myself and awake to the meaning and power of life, it seems daily more amazing to me that men such as these should dare to play with the most precious truths (or the most deadly untruths), by which the whole human race listening to them could be informed or deceived—all the world their audiences for ever, with pleased ear, and passionate heart—and yet, to this submissive infinitude of souls, and evermore succeeding and succeeding multitude, hungry for bread of life, they do but play upon sweetly modulated pipes; with pompous nomenclature adorn the councils of hell; touch a troubadour's guitar to the courses of the suns; and fill the openings of eternity, before which prophets have veiled their faces, and which angels desire to look into, with idle puppets of their scholastic imagination." This trifling with great problems, this free, unfettered use of imagery when concerned with the most sacred of themes, was to Ruskin a greater mystery of life than that already noticed.

I stay not now to inquire how far his drastic condemnation of the masters of literature is justified. It may quite well be that Ruskin's criticism is too severe, and that he has mistaken for levity what is in truth only the artist's device

for enabling him to handle themes that otherwise he could not touch. Be that, however, as it may, there is undoubtedly in this fine call to honesty and sincerity of thought and speech a lesson that we, in our humbler spheres of influence and activity, would do well to take to heart. I do not believe for an instant that the ordinary men and women around us are really indifferent to the deep questions which, in Ruskin's opinion, ought to be to us human beings so paramount, nor to the religious truths which all down the ages have been the sustenance and nutriment of human souls. The strain and stress of the merely natural struggle for existence is no doubt vastly more formidable now than it was once, and great masses of our population seem " to be possessed," as a well-known German writer has recently expressed it, " by a passion that sweeps all before it, a reckless spirit of aggressiveness, a disposition to lower all culture to the level of their interests and comprehension, to replace quality by quantity, making of life a rougher, ruder thing, repressing individual freedom, and evincing a defiant self-assertion." Yes, all that may be true. But yet, underlying the rush and tear of modern industrial occupations, there is the vague, half-articulate longing and yearning for clearer insight into, and stronger assurance of, the fundamental conditions on which love and beauty and goodness—the great worths and values of human existence—ultimately rest. Ordinary men and women may be tired of the conventionalism that often characterises religious observances, but they are not tired of

religion. They know, as well as you can tell them, that a mere round of careless pleasure, even if they could secure it, will not avail to bring them true contentment, true happiness, and that somehow they have got to fathom for themselves the meaning of their earthly being—its trials, its sorrows, its joys—if it is to be a pilgrimage on which they can look back with pride, and to yield them satisfaction in the end. Matthew Arnold has pictured in beautiful lines the buried life that he conceives to be concealed in the inmost soul of each one of us :—

> "Often, in the world's most crowded streets,
> Often, in the din of strife,
> There rises an unspeakable desire
> After the knowledge of our buried life;
> A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
> In tracking out our true, original course;
> A longing to inquire
> Into the mystery of this heart which beats
> So wild, so deep, in us—to know
> Whence our lives come and where they go."

That deep craving, that inexpressible desire, which you will find everywhere encountering you, it will be your high mission to attempt to satisfy. You have got somehow to drag the "buried life" into the clear light of day, to make it part of the actual life which the men and women to whom you will minister shall really live. And you will fulfil that mission only by your own sincerity, only by your own carefully thought-out conviction, only by having realised for yourselves what your own buried life implies.

The task, I know, is not an easy one; it is only

as men equipped with "the whole armour of God" that you can hope to be equal to the demands it makes upon individual thought and sympathetic feeling for the interests, the troubles and the struggles of others. But, on the other hand, the opportunities that are given you are such as few men who are not of your calling can ever hope to have at their disposal. Week by week you are privileged to address large bodies of your fellows, without let or hindrance, upon subjects about which in personal intercourse it is difficult, or impossible, to utter what one has on one's heart to say. "In the congregation," as a distinguished Oxford theologian puts it, "which to the man of art is but a vulgar multitude, what can the eye of insight see? Not faces or dresses, but souls; not manners, but men; not a multitude of impossibly perfect units, but a crowd of potential persons, an epitome of mankind. Here is an old man with all his ancient passions burnt out and become cold, asking pardon of a God to whom he can give nothing but dumb gratitude; and there is a woman, who was yesterday a wife and to-day is a widow, seeking comfort for a sorrow time cannot heal. Here sits a merchant who a year since thought himself rich beyond the dreams of avarice, and now knows that he is poor in friends and penniless, lifting a sore heart to Him who can alone read his troubles; and there beside him sits a successful man, who, born in poverty, now rolls in wealth and who needs the thought of the Eternal God to keep him humble and mindful of duty. . . . And not far off are a

youth who a year ago left home a simple boy, and has grown by temptation resisted into a purposeful man; a new-made mother who wishes to find a voice that shall express her inarticulate yet irrepressible gladness; a family of orphans who know not what they have lost; and a childless pair who once knew the sounds that make the parents' heart glad and can know them no more." "Who," he asks, "can see or tell all that a single congregation has to show?" What is it but "a splendid moment of crowded being, where all men are immortal, and all may attain the beatific vision, where souls who have lost paradise struggle to regain it; and He who guards its gates at once woos and awes, invites and winnows, those who would enter." To be permitted thus to come into immediate contact with the souls of men, and to be to them the revealer of that which will constitute them sons of God and brothers of each other, is indeed to stand in a favoured position in the human community, and ought to impel you to throw every power you possess into a work that offers such unique opportunities for furthering the cause of truth and goodness.

Strive, then, to make men realise the dignity of human life, and the beauty of the world in which that life is lived. I have referred to Ruskin and I am reminded that the message I am bringing to you was also that which through a long life he was trying to deliver. Not so many months ago I was standing beneath the yews that shelter the little churchyard in Coniston and throw their shadows over his grave. Through the trees a gentle

wind was murmuring, and it seemed as though the birds that lived near were all tame and were singing round his tomb the songs he loved to hear. And, as I pondered, there came to me the thought of those characteristic words of his, now engraved on the granite stone that faces Derwentwater from the lovely vantage ground of Friars' Crag. "The spirit of God is around you in the air you breathe, and His glory in the light that you see, and in the fruitfulness of the earth and the joy of its creatures. He has written for you day by day His revelation, as He has granted for you day by day your daily bread." Go forth to your scenes of labour intent upon being to those to whom you will minister the interpreters of that revelation, and you will earn assuredly the gratitude of men and also I trust the blessing of Him whose glory you have sought to render manifest.

IV

THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE UPON THE APPRECIATION OF COMMON THINGS

If those of us who are now engaged in the strain and struggle of the work to which we have devoted ourselves were asked what portions of our lives we should be most glad to live over again, most of us would, I imagine, agree with the great teacher who said he should eagerly name his college years, and we should feel like him that could we but repeat them, with our present knowledge of life, our whole existence would be lifted to a higher plane. What we then accomplished seems, from the point of view of retrospect, so miserably small compared with what it might have been; and, were only similar opportunities offered to us once more, what scholars would we not become! The poet Gray spoke of the "inglorious Miltons," mute because they never had been taught to sing. But how many a humble teacher might have reached the level of a Faraday or a Herschel, how many a country parson that of a Chalmers or a Caird, could only a second youth have been granted to him, that he might have entered upon the student career conscious of the manifold ways in which he might train his powers? Perhaps, indeed, it is all a mistake; perhaps, could the priceless years of

preparation be recalled, they would still pass by without his gaining the equipment he wants, or mastering the pages he cannot now read, or clearing up the thought he now finds obscure. Yet the fact that he has the consciousness of the almost boundless possibilities that would thus be opened to him is surely reason enough for his anxiety that those who are yet in possession of the golden hours, when the bright morning sun is shedding its light upon things human and divine, should not fall into his weaknesses, nor neglect what he neglected, but take occasion by the hand and build up the intellect that, by kinship with the best that has been thought and said in the world, will be of help and inspiration to their fellow men.

I am aware, of course, that feelings of a wholly different kind may also arise in the mind of him who has wrestled with the problems and mysteries of life, and has been disheartened times out of number by a sense of his own inadequate endowment for the task. The question may force itself upon him—will at times force itself upon him—whether any little insight into the hidden meaning of things which he may conceivably obtain is worth the toil and effort it will cost him to win, whether after all it would not be for him the wiser and the happier course just to rest content with life and nature as he finds them, to share innocently in the joys they bring, and to take refuge in a simple, unpretending trust in the inherent goodness of creation, which reason and reflexion may perchance only spoil. Who of us, for example, that has watched the unfolding

glories of the past few months of spring and early summer—the fresh bright green of shrub and tree, of woodland and meadow—the rich display of colour and form which every newborn day has recently been calling into being—the notes of music which have been pouring upon us from boughs and hedgerows and sky—without a longing desire to surrender himself unreservedly to this wealth of loveliness, and to leave the distracting antinomies of reason with their oppositions and contradictions unresolved? What tired and weary thinker has not at times envied the quiet restful lot of the husbandman or the shepherd, schooled in the eye of nature, and untroubled by any of the obstinate questionings that leave his soul no peace? Some such persuasion no doubt it was that filled the mind of Emerson when he burst forth into that gladsome canticle of farewell to all that had held him back from the scene he loved:

> "O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
> I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
> And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
> Where the evening star so holy shines,
> I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
> At the sophist schools, and the learned clan;
> For what are they all, in their high conceit,
> When man in the bush with God may meet?"

Are, then, our academies and schools of learning embarking upon a barren or even a mischievous enterprise? Are they wilfully stifling the prophetic spirit, drying up the genial currents of native enthusiasm, cramming the mind with so

much information about the past that it becomes incapable of appreciating the inspirations of the present? In that case you have, indeed, small reason to be grateful to the teachers of this place, and those of you who to-day are leaving it may well heave a sigh of relief, now that the hour of release has struck, and give vent to-night to couplets no less jubilant than Emerson's, seeing that your period of imprisonment is over. Not such, however, I venture to predict, will be the feelings with which you will depart, and I have even a shrewd suspicion that Emerson was doing injustice to his saner mind when he expressed himself in the words I have quoted. For in truth that "sylvan home" of his had become for him the sacred spot it was just through and in consequence of the very things he was thus affecting to despise; the over-arching heavens, the beauteous earth, the whole panorama around him, was saturated and imbued with those very imaginations, ideas, and conceptions which he had gleaned from the scholars and thinkers he here treats with such scant respect, and without which he would have stretched himself beneath the pines in vain. There is in truth no fact of experience more certain than this, that we see only what we bring with us the power of seeing, that if we are to extract from life's surroundings their deeper and profounder meanings we must fling into them something of the ideal significance we would carry away, that if we go to them with none of the power of insight inherited from the great spirits of our race, they will reveal to us no sanctity and awaken

in us no assurance of that which is divine. Herein, then, is to be discerned one essential purpose of a liberal culture, a purpose which we might almost express as being to humanise nature, and to naturalise man—that is to say, to see reflected in nature some of the soul's sublimest thoughts, and to find in the soul a life at home with nature, because there nature comes to interpret and to understand itself.

No writer, indeed, was ever more convinced of the truth of all this, or ever strove with greater persistency and persuasiveness to inculcate it, than Emerson himself. If there was one theme more than another of which he never tired it was the Wordsworthian theme of the exquisite adaptation of the individual mind to the external world, and—"theme this but little heard of among men"—of the external world to the individual mind. Man, he urged, is "lord of nature," not because he is its most subtle inhabitant, but because he is its head and heart, and "finds something of himself in every great and small thing, in every mountain stratum, and in every new law of colour, fact of astronomy, or atmospheric influence which observation or analysis lays open." And it seemed to him that "the wonderful congruity which subsists between man and the world" is due to the fact that the intelligibility everywhere exhibited in the latter has its ground in that supreme Intellect of which our finite intellects are the offspring and to whom they are therefore allied. "Some thoughts," he averred, "always find us young, and keep us

so"; and foremost among these was the thought that "God incarnates himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of his world,"—a world which thus becomes for us "the mirror of the soul."

Philosophically, of course, the contention just indicated opens up large issues, but I wish to make use of it now as a means of introducing a single consideration. So far as religious experience is concerned, there can obviously be no demarcation of territory such as must inevitably be observed in the various branches of intellectual pursuit. If a minister of religion is to interpret the ideals which inspire the moral consciousness, if he is to exhibit the methods of the universe as the manifestations of a reason and intelligence in whom our finite minds may safely trust, if he is to carry us back to Truth and Beauty and Goodness as the basal "Ideas," in Plato's sense of the word, to the contemplation of which the human soul can attain, then assuredly you must not seek to confine him in a limited domain, bidding him there to attend to his own business and not to meddle with what lies outside. The Goodness, which it is his privilege to uphold, is not a business, but that which should be imperative in all business. The Love, which it is his function to awaken in his fellows, is not one amongst the virtues, but the very source and fountain of them all. The Truth and Beauty, which it is his office to unfold, is the subject-matter of no special science, but the ground-plan of the entire realm of reality, of which the special sciences are after all

but partial and fragmentary interpretations. If, then, there is anything human, or indeed anything natural, that is for him devoid of interest, he is in so far belying the name he bears; and if he proceeds to justify his lack of interest by instituting fictitious divisions,—dismissing *this* as secular, *that* as political, *the other* as scientific, thus leaving only a barren residuum for religion,—he has convicted himself of incompetency and has given his charge away. It is precisely upon its breadth and comprehensiveness that the essence of religion depends, and nothing can be more fatal than to admit the right of any province of human life to fall outside the religious sphere and to excuse itself on the plea of its exclusively worldly character. If God exists, there is nothing in reality that can be the same as it would have been had He existed not, and failure to find evidence of His being in *any* department of natural fact or in *any* period of human history must be due to our lack of spiritual insight and not to the character of what is actually there to behold.

I am not unmindful of the gravity of the problem I have been forcing to the front. Who is sufficient for these things? Where is the individual who would not shrink from giving himself to a calling, in face of the huge demands that seem thus to be imposed upon it? Not seldom, I confess, it does surprise me to discover with what apparent lightness of heart the momentous decision to devote oneself to the ministry of religion comes to be made. I hesitate not to say

that, in my humble judgment, to fulfil its duties worthily peculiar aptitudes of heart, mind and soul, aptitudes which are possessed by comparatively few, are necessary, and that could we but draw to its ranks only those whose discernment of spiritual verities is keen, and whose zeal for righteousness approaches a prophet's enthusiasm, the ministry would speedily evince itself as a power of the first magnitude, and achieve once more a work in society for the performance of which there is still no other agency in the least degree adequate. But let no word of mine discourage where the voice of duty has led the way.

He who has been diverted from the market-place, or from the haunts of manual toil, to join the company of preachers, not by any poor and paltry motive of rising in the social scale, but by a sincere appreciation of divine truth and an earnest resolve to be faithful to it, by a fervent conviction of the grandeur of life and a genuine pity that men should be so insensible to what is there to be seen and felt, need have no fear of being lost in the vastness of the revelation, which the whole world of man and nature provides, of the Wisdom and Love whose organ and witness he aspires to be. If already, within the narrow confines of his native town or village, the perennial beauties of earth and sky—the woodland path, or the murmuring of the water in a curl of the stream, the loveliness of trees and flowers and sunlit clouds, the quiet majesty of the starry heavens—have awakened in his mind the feeling of " a Presence that disturbs

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mental toil requisite for gaining an insight into the ways of nature and the teachings of history of which I have been speaking. As on a previous occasion I have urged, you cannot gauge a man's scholarship or reflective power by the number or quantity of the facts stored up in some lumber-room of his mind, and certainly to load the memory with a mass of tabulated information would no more serve to produce a reliable interpreter of divine things than it would to produce a cultured man in any profession or calling. Not the quantity but the quality of the facts is what is mainly of importance; their meaning, their significance, is what we chiefly need to have before us, if they are to disclose the rationality and systematic arrangement of the material universe, the intrinsic dignity and boundless possibilities of man's nature, and the spiritual principles operative in both.

You will remember how, in that unique masterpiece of literary and philosophic genius, the *Republic*, as it is somewhat misleadingly called in English, Plato draws a striking picture of genuine education or culture, as he conceived it. The object of education, he tells us, is not "to put sight, as it were, into blind eyes," not, that is to say, to cram the mind with lifeless facts and dogmas, undigested and consequently meaningless; the object of education is wholly and entirely different. Reason, the "eye of the soul," never is blind. But its gaze may be, and is, too often directed upon the false and the fleeting, the impure and the base. Too often the "eye of the soul" may be dragged downwards by the

"leaden weights" of tradition and prejudice, of passion and desire, to what is of the earth earthy. According to Plato, then, the heaven-born teacher is he who seeks not to multiply but to remove these leaden weights, to liberate the soul from these encumbrances, so that it may follow the impulse which is native to it, and soar upwards. Plato was, it is certainly not too much to say, one of the first discoverers of the spiritual life, and what he is here urging is a direct outcome of his great discovery. He was aware of the deadening influence which certain aspects of existence, when they are allowed to dominate the thoughts of men, exert upon human minds and characters. He was aware that life lived alone for what is material, transient, perishable—lived merely for gain or rank or social position in and for themselves, is unnatural—unnatural, because rational minds partake by nature in the spiritual, the eternal, the imperishable. Education was, therefore, for him the instrument of pruning the soul of these unnatural excrescences, of thus enabling it to penetrate beneath the superficial appearances of sensuous things, and so to perceive the grandeur that was concealed under apparent meanness, the good that lies at the basis of the order and regularity of the world.

Plato's is an ancient but assuredly not an antiquated voice. The experience of two thousand years has amply confirmed what he maintained, with unsurpassed grace and skill, in the teeth of the degenerate tendencies of his time. Are we not constantly finding that life is far from being

for any one of us the poor, bare, barren thing we sometimes take it to be? Are we not constantly discovering that its apparent dulness, monotony, and lack of interest, come only from our ignorance of the deeper agencies which in it are everywhere at work? Cannot the insight of a master-mind help us to see, cannot the touch of a master-hand disclose, the ineffable glory and beauty that are latent in its homeliest details—the power, the pathos, the tenderness, with which our common life is replete? Now, it is no impossible thing for the diligent and earnest student to obtain during his college years such a conception of the universe of fact, such an understanding of the great personalities of history, as shall secure that nature, character, life, all present to him a thousand stations for gazing upwards, all open out to him, as otherwise never would have been opened out, the spiritual sphere wherein human souls, the humblest and the greatest, live and move and have their being.

Be convinced of it, the wider your outlook upon the universe, the more you share the thoughts, the ideals, the aspirations, of the strong and intrepid souls of our rich human world, the more confident and pregnant will your message be to the men and women who Sunday by Sunday will sit below you, and listen to your words. Many of them will come there with a yearning for light and peace, and needing more than they will ever say your help and guidance in the effort to conquer sin and to feel assured of a Love that is at the heart of things and supreme. You will want the large experience of the human ages to reverse the

deceptive judgments upon the events of the present to which most of us are perpetually liable. How exposed we are, in our purely individual experience, to the besetting delusion that the only real, positive, substantial things in life are the visible material products of our craft or industry, how apt we are to take the inner ideal life for an insubstantial pageant which, like Prospero's enchanted isle, will fade and leave not a rack behind! Look, however, at the life of to-day in the light of what has been, and the new perspective will enable you to correct an erroneous impression of that kind. Historical fact points all the other way. As a well-known religious teacher has powerfully said, "the glories of the past are not in huge trades, or fine properties, or even in laws and rites and institutions which in their day kindled the passions of party strife; these, chafed into dust by the mouldering hand of time, successively fall away with the earthly conditions from which they come; while the mere impulses of expression, through which affection and admiration pour themselves forth and heart appeals to heart, mould themselves into imperishable Arts, though asking only for the most perishable of materials—forms and tones, colour and language; and precisely the most ethereal and interior of thoughts, which visit us only in evanescent gleams —of something terrible in sin, of something infinite in duty, of a possible union with God through love and a mastery of life through entire surrender—prove the most permanent realities in history; constructing themselves into faiths which

have been the cradle of nations and the divine nurse of the most vivifying individual minds."

By way of illustration, I might refer to the fiercely debated question as to the importance of the Classics in education—a question which, I understand, has recently excited much lively discussion amongst the students of this college. No greater calamity could, I am persuaded, happen to our educational system than the loss of the Greek and Roman literatures as one of the chief subjects of the curriculum. The mind that is able in any degree to transport itself into the sphere in which the ancient Greeks lived and thought and felt; the man into whose soul there has passed in some small measure the soul of Homer, of Sophocles, of Plato, will transcend the limitations of time and place, and will find a significance that would otherwise be hidden from him in the life and thought and feeling of the present hour. Who can measure what the spiritual life of modern Europe owes to the Greeks?

"Man with man they met together in a kindly life and free,
And their gods were near about them in the sunlight or the sea.

There the light of hidden Wisdom sprang to their compelling quest;
Ray by ray the dawn from Hellas rose upon the wakening West.

Every thought of all their thinking swayed the world for good or ill,
Every pulse of all their life-blood beats across the ages still."

Yes; swayed by their thought, impelled by their influence, we are and cannot help but be, whether

we are conscious of it or no. But to *be conscious* of it—to deliberately follow what Matthew Arnold called "the bent of Hellenism"; to find, once more, as the Greeks found, a harmony between man as a moral being and nature as the scene of order and law; to trace, as they traced, the principle of reason immanent in the course of outward occurrences; to feel, as they felt, that man is not the creature of circumstances, but the lord of them, and that he can mould them by the powers of intellect and of creative imagination —that, surely, would mean an elevation and a heightening of our civilisation, the effect of which it would be hard to over-estimate. You may gain, if you will, from the study of the Classics, slight though that study may be, a means of enriching and fertilising the minds of your hearers such as you will never cease to be grateful for.

From ancient Greece to modern England is a long stride. And yet the continuity of human development has not been broken. A spiritual world, becoming richer and richer with content, has been gradually forming itself through the centuries on the basis of the natural, and the higher life of the men and women of to-day has to be lived therein. To tear away the "leaden weights" that drag their soul's eye downwards, and prevent it from realising what is there to be realised, is a function which the religious teacher is more than ever called upon in our day and generation to discharge. What careful observer of contemporary civilisation can fail to feel apprehension at the threatening advance of the

utilitarian and narrow commercial tendencies of the time—tendencies which, if allowed to go unchecked, would speedily reduce human existence to the level of mere animal being? Over and over again the cry is being raised of the uselessness of the ideal ends of humanity; over and over again, and from many sides, we hear the miserable complaint that these ends are not practical, by which is meant that they will not enable us to procure the bread which keeps the vitality of the bodily organism in working order. Such is the one standard by which you will find multitudes of men estimating the importance or the futility of human pursuits. Of ideas and truths, of ideals and aims, of loves and enjoyments, that have worth and value, not on account of what they will get, but in and for themselves alone, they will not stop to listen. What is the use of them—is the often-recurring query,—as though it were not use enough to rear, instead of human automata, human souls! Think, too, of the haste and speed and whirl of modern life, of the way in which men and women are hurried along in the turmoil of daily work and business, absorbed in the ceaseless rush of securing somehow the means of living, and never getting the opportunity to live! The grind of it from morn till eve each day, well nigh all the year round, is gradually killing the soul (and, for the matter of that, even the bodies also) of thousands and thousands of our citizens, taking the heart out of them, and by degrees eating away the intelligence, the insight, the imagination of England. Dull sameness, dreary monotony, is in

danger of becoming more and more our cruel curse and pain. The minute division of labour, the employment of machinery which often converts men themselves into mere machines, the demand that one and the same thing shall be done over and over again—what a pernicious, deadening influence it all has upon the capacity of living with spiritual realities, and of appreciating the simple yet great things of nature and of life!

But you, who would be the harbingers of Christ's gospel to your fellow men—you have, as in duty bound, to take within your care and keeping those simple yet great things. See to it that they are safe in your hands. Do not run the danger of not rightly appreciating them yourselves. To so fill the life of men with knowledge in the deeper sense, with the power of perceiving what is beautiful, that relaxation from manual toil may minister to the development of moral character, and engender the aptitude really to enjoy what is true and lovely and good—that should be the aim of the preacher, vastly more practical really and more far-reaching in its effects than numbers of the aims at present being pursued with such breathless eagerness all around us. So conceived, yours is a calling full of splendid opportunities, and from my heart I wish you success and happiness in it. Let not your people, at any rate, be bereft of the mighty comfort of the conviction that monotony is not the rule of God's universe. Let them at least not depart from this world before they have learnt to recognise what is divine and sacred in it; let them at least be pre-

pared for a future existence by carrying with them a rich experience of the existence which now is theirs. And then, whatever evil voices may rage, grateful hearts will say of you, as Matthew Arnold once said of an "ill and o'erwork'd" preacher in the East End of London :—

"O human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light,
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee, and to right thee if thou roam—
Not with lost toil thou labourest through the night!
Thou mak'st the heaven thou hop'st indeed thy home."

V

THE CHURCH AND HUMAN LIFE

This is an eventful moment for those of you who are bidding farewell to our little society, and are about to take your share in the work for which the time spent in these class-rooms has constituted the Lehrjahre—the years of preparation. You are seeking to serve your fellow men through the ministry of religion, through the agency of the Church, and I would fain, if one may hope so much, be the bearer of some helpful message that shall confirm your assurance of the high importance of the tasks awaiting you, and of its being worth while to expend upon them the strength, the energy, and the resources of a life. The great institution, for which it will be your privilege to labour, has met in these days, like almost every other institution, with a vast amount of hostile and unsparing criticism, and it will be part of your mission to make men realise that the things for which the Church stands are still precious, still vital, still essential, both to the individual and to the community. The first requisite of success in this respect will be, at all events, that you yourselves should believe with earnest, genuine, and downright sincerity in the enduring value for mankind of the aims the

Church has to further and the ideals it has to cherish. However it may be with other occupations, here, at any rate, intense conviction is the indispensable condition of fruitful industry; whole-hearted loyalty and allegiance an absolutely necessary passport to peace and contentment of mind. I suppose a lawyer can passionately plead for a client whilst being himself fully persuaded of the latter's guilt, but a prophet who has lost his faith in his prophecy had certainly better retrace his steps ere it be yet too late. In these days of giddy tastes and hesitating beliefs you are going forth to represent a cause which must be as dear to you as life itself, if it is to prosper in your hands.

The cause of the Church we will call it. I am informed that the word "church" cannot be uttered in certain assemblies without a whole host of images of cardinals, bishops, priests, and monks, each arrayed in the insignia of his office, arising in the minds of the auditors. I need hardly protest that I have not come to Wales to suggest visions of that kind. "The Church," said a distinguished Scottish divine, "is neither more nor less than a spiritual corporation for putting down sin and making men good." I do not say that I regard this definition as exhaustive. The Church, I take it, is much more than an institution for the culture of the moral life; but, whatever else it is, most certainly it *is* primarily and distinctively *that*, and in strenuously insisting upon the moral aspect of religion we are, I believe, standing upon ground which is not likely to be disputed.

But the term "spiritual corporation" will carry our thoughts further. I should like to picture Plato's ideal state as becoming gradually realised in the Christian Church, although on a broader and more extensive scale than Plato conceived to be possible. For the Platonic ideal was essentially that of a community within which there would be, as its nucleus, so to speak, a spiritual corporation, the members of which would be occupied with the best and highest things—the things which are lovable and precious for their own sake. The soul would thus be carried out of the sea which encrusts it with the "shells and stones and tangle" of the earthly appetites into communion with "the divine, the immortal, the eternal," to which it is akin, and, awakened from the dream-life in which men wrangle about the shadows of power and grasp at phantoms of good, it would be in touch with reality in its essence, and recognise that whatever is true and right and beautiful in the whole world is due thereto. Beyond all question, we have here one of the most significant and far-reaching conceptions ever attained by the mind of man—the conception, namely, that in this universe of endless multiplicity and change, the intrinsically valuable, the intrinsically worthy, is alone the ultimately real, the ultimately true—that for the sake of which all other things are, and which the mere mechanism of nature, vast and huge though it be, is as impotent to create as it is powerless to destroy. To know, and to live in the light of, this reality was, in Plato's view, the highest mode of human existence, and he who did so would

refine, elevate and ennoble the society to which he belonged.

How far we, in modern times, have descended from the height of the Greek ideal is, however, only too patent. Emerson contrived, in his genial manner, to bring home to us our little care for moral and spiritual realities for their own sake by pointing, for example, to the fact that we bluntly ask for our sovereign "grant him in health and wealth long to live," while in the diary of the excellent Samuel Pepys, the most pious petition contained is that the new coach which he had just acquired might, by the grace of God, be continued to him. But, all the same, the Christian Church *does* aspire to be a spiritual corporation of which its head and founder would have approved—a society of persons who are seeking to escape from the narrow and fretful region of self-interest into the larger and serener world where Christ taught us to find the fitting environment of the soul. Plato's conception lives to some extent again in the ideal of a fellowship of minds, knit together as disciples of one who pleaded with men to be faithful to their own deepest experiences, to trust their own noblest loves, and to revere the gracious beneficence and wisdom discernible by the understanding eye and felt by the responsive heart. It has been said of Emerson that "his life was one long conversation with the invisible divine, expressing itself through individuals," and certainly no man is ever at his best or highest when he has lost the power of so conversing. And it is because, in the realm of the spirit, the fellowship of mind with mind

means the strengthening and the enrichment of each, because it is universally felt that, in the sublimest reaches of the soul's attainment, the individual is led beyond the merely personal self into closest intimacy with the inner being of others, that religious communion has been one of the main functions of the Church, throughout its history, to encourage and foster. Accordingly, the Church has become, so to speak, the syndicate of those who in the sympathies of a common want and a common trust would seek the consecration of the Divine Being upon their earthly work and the sustenance which that consecration alone can give to the life of conscientious labour and of self-sacrificing service. Taking over a vast heritage from the past, religious fellowship secures no less innumerable subtle influences from the present; and humanity would be immeasurably the poorer were men to cease contemplating together the spiritual realities above them and yet within them and around.

Expressed very briefly that is what I take to be the function of the true Church of Christ. It is delineated more adequately and with fine Celtic enthusiasm in a thoughtful little work [1] of an able Welsh preacher—Mr. Lloyd Thomas, of Nottingham—a copy of which I trust each of you about to enter the ministry will carry away with you. So conceived, the Church is, of course, an institution considerably more comprehensive in its scope than

[1] *A Free Catholic Church.* London: Williams & Norgate, 1912. Mr. Lloyd Thomas is now minister of the Old Meeting Church, Birmingham.

the select community of choice spirits that Plato would have banded together for the pursuit of the highest ends. The latter was to be composed of the cultured few. Christianity, with its great principle of the infinite worth of each individual soul, has been enabled so to widen the spiritual fraternity as to include the hewers of wood and drawers of water, who, according to the Greek ideal, would have been left outside. "Down in Judæa" they may not have known everything, but they knew a few things it would have been well even for the cultured intellects of Athens to have recognised. They knew that the spiritual well-being of mankind is intimately associated with the tillage of the field, the pasture of the flocks, the customs of the market, the habits of the home; and the whole bent of modern progress has been to substantiate and to confirm that assurance of theirs. So that the old Roman motto "extra ecclesiam nulla salus," although in one sense harsh and exclusive, turns out in another and deeper sense to be profoundly true. If by salvation be meant the realisation of the soul's best, then that end is not to be attained except through the medium of wide human fellowship.

I am not, of course, oblivious of the frightful mangling and mutilation the institution of the Church has undergone in the rough base usage of the world. Christian communities have been reproached with narrowing down the number of the elect to themselves, and then proceeding to damn ninety-nine per cent. of their own diminished numbers, and it cannot be said that the reproach

has been altogether ill-deserved. Repeatedly, the life of a "sect" has been substituted for the life of a "church," and men have failed to grasp the vital difference between a temporary concurrence in theological opinions that constitutes the one and a common assurance of spiritual relationship that furnishes the basis of the other. Not alone from Rome, but from many another centre of ecclesiastical jurisdiction the attempt has been made to satisfy man's religious needs by prescribing the tenets of his faith, and by authoritatively demanding of him to believe only what it declares to be true and to do only what it declares to be right. No great ideal is, I suppose, ever realised without suffering some deterioration in the process, and perhaps Plato would have predicted the deterioration I have specified as the penalty of widening the range of communion. But the human soul cannot be permanently fettered; and throughout the Christian centuries there have never been wanting sincere and earnest men who have been faithful to the ideal in its pristine purity, and who have insisted that not correctness of dogma, but the consciousness of spiritual need, the sense of filial dependence upon God, is the only condition Christ would have imposed for membership in his Church. And in these days more than ever it is coming to be seen that fidelity of the Church to her founder consists not in straining at every gnat of so-called heresy, but rather in contriving to embrace within her circle the largest number of associates, who, with whatever diversities of thought and temperament, are in essential things at one.

"Do not tell me," exclaimed Channing, "that I surrender myself to a fiction of imagination, when I say that distant Christians, that all Christians and myself, form one body, one Church, just as far as a common love and piety possess our hearts. Nothing is more real than this spiritual union. There *is* one grand all-comprehending Church; and, if I am a Christian, I belong to it, and no man can shut me out of it. You may exclude me from your Roman Church, your Episcopal Church, and your Calvinistic Church, on account of supposed defects in my creed or my sect, and I am content to be excluded. But I will not be severed from the great body of Christ." And he goes on to declare that no ecclesiastical combinations on earth shall sunder him from such men as Fénélon and Pascal, from Archbishop Leighton, Jeremy Taylor, and John Howard. Their spirit, flowing out through their lives and writings, penetrates his soul and forms a portion of his own being, so that but for them he would have been a different man from what he is.

No careful observer of the tendencies of the present time can entertain a moment's doubt that Christian men and women of various denominations are coming more and more to recognise that in words such as these there is portrayed with strict accuracy the catholicity that ought to characterise the spiritual fraternity we call "the Church." They are coming to see the difference between what Mr. Lloyd Thomas distinguishes—and I think rightly distinguishes—as doctrine and dogma. Each individual thinker

must form his own intellectual opinions and conclusions concerning the problems with which theology has to deal, and these conclusions and opinions will be doctrines that will seem to him, and which will be for him, vital and important. But dogma, as Mr. Lloyd Thomas points out, is not doctrine merely—it is doctrine authoritatively decreed, doctrine externally enforced, by a sect or its ecclesiastical representatives. And it is this element of compulsion, overriding the reason and conscience of man, and suppressing the right and duty of individual judgment which, as he says, "degrades a Church from a voluntary fellowship of the spirit into a legislative and judicial authority." The non-acceptance of, or disobedience to, a dogma thus becomes heresy, just as the violation of an act of parliament becomes a crime in law. The enforcement in this way of dogma is as detrimental to the successful pursuit of theological science, on the one hand, as it is destructive of the ideal of religious fellowship and common worship, on the other. Theology, as a science, can only thrive when each of its devotees uses the gifts God has given him to solve his own intellectual difficulties; theology, as a science, can only thrive when students pursue their work subject to constant mutual criticism, and with a ready willingness to revise their conclusions in the light of any fresh evidence which free unfettered inquiry may yield. So far as the Church is concerned, it is precisely the vicious practice of stereotyping doctrines and of converting them into dogmas that has alienated thoughtful minds

from religious societies, and has led such minds to regard themselves as heretics. Even the poet who sang so sweetly over Wordsworth's grave, and who feels so sympathetically the beauty of Wordsworth's simple faith and piety, can discern in the Church of to-day nothing but a remnant or survival of decaying mediævalism and superstition—

> "Outwardly splendid as of old,
> Inwardly sparkless, void and cold;
> Her force and fire all spent and gone,
> Like the dead moon, she still shines on."

And he pictures the time when, liberated from the incubus of sectarian prejudices and what he takes to be the intolerable pretensions of existing religious organisations, there will arise the possibility of that vision of divine realities towards which the noblest minds of our race have been unceasingly aspiring. "When," he says,

> "When whelmed are altar, priest, and creed;
> When all the faiths have passed;
> Perhaps, from darkening incense freed,
> God may emerge at last."

Is it not a sad and melancholy reflection that the institution of the Church, which arose from the human need of worshipping together the Father of us all as Love, and from the need of co-operating together in love for the service of our brother men, should present a spectacle like this to thousands of earnest truth-seekers, in consequence of which they are repelled from the fold of Christian discipleship? Let us not be under the

delusion that these minds are antagonistic to religious aims and ideals, or that they are enemies to those objects for which the Church, when it is faithful to its own ideal, subsists to further. These minds know, often better than you can tell them, that the consciousness of a divine relationship brings to man a dignity that affects all he touches, and enables him to realise the greatness that underlies the apparent littleness of our ordinary existence, so that in the hour of humblest endeavour he becomes aware of standing in the midst of the eternities of which God takes care. They know, often better than you can tell them, that human life would be a grander, nobler, sublimer thing, if only we could contemplate it together as impregnated with a sacred trust, and as claiming from us the devotion of our best powers to the ends of righteousness and truth. Listen to the words of one who was not accustomed to speak well of orthodox dogmas, but who yet had no unkind judgment to express concerning the essentials of religion :—" I can conceive," said Professor Huxley, " the existence of an Established Church which should be a blessing to the community—a Church in which, week by week, services should be devoted, not to the iteration of abstract propositions in theology, but to the setting before men's minds of an ideal of true, just, and pure living; a place in which those who are weary of the burden of daily cares should find a moment's rest in the contemplation of the higher life which is possible for all, though attained by so few; a place in which the man of strife and of business

should have time to think how small, after all, are the rewards he covets compared with peace and charity. Depend upon it, if such a Church existed no one would seek to disestablish it."

To the ministry of that truly Catholic Church—and whether it be "established" or not in the legal sense, matters, I think, but little—I welcome you with all my heart to-day. Come to it with something of the imagination of the poet and the enthusiasm of the moral reformer. Come to it with the determination to make its members feel that there are divine qualities in the soul of man, and in human society, in the city's roar, and in the quiet retreat of the home, no less than in the tremulous glory of the nightly heavens and in the splendour of the natural world which it is the privilege of us all to enjoy. I can imagine no epoch of human history when the ministrations of such a Church are more imperatively called for than at the present time. The stress and strain of human life are increasing by leaps and bounds; the pressure of the struggle for existence is being felt as it has never been felt before. The mad rush of modern employments, much of it wholly unnecessary, is becoming overwhelming; in office, shop and study, the demands upon our energy and activity are vastly more exacting and relentless than they were for our forefathers.

> "What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
> What leisure to grow wise?"

A well-known essayist complains, not without reason, that the feverish hankering after speed,

the craving for novelty and excitement, is depriving the modern citizen of the possibility of anything that can be called a large view of the world. This headlong curiosity, this devouring of distance, instead of adding to our sense of nature's greatness, makes, he insists, the world seem smaller and the mind smaller. The error of the motor-car policy is, he urges, that "it never understands anything or anybody." "To it, Arabia may be a whirl of dust and China a flash of rice fields; and the sensation is doubtless glorious. But Arabia is not a whirl of dust, and China is not a flash of rice fields. These are things ancient and inscrutable, things with secret powers buried like treasure, things that can only be understood from the inside, things that can only be felt with the loyalty of children and with the great patience of poets."

I stay not now to inquire into the justice of this sweeping indictment of the recent tendencies of our civilisation. But I do say that to whatever extent it represents the truth the more urgently the Church is needed to bring us back to the large quiet things of life, to moderate and chasten the ambitions of men, and to repair the havoc wrought by the excessive anxiety and worry of our busy years. It will be your high vocation not to appear in the pulpit week after week with a hastily concocted piece of talk, but to help those to whom you will minister to enter into the spiritual inheritance which is theirs, and to take their share in doing Christ's work and in doing it in Christ's own way. And in entering upon that mission, you are among

the latest in a procession of believers in the good and true which started forth in an immemorial past to redeem and inspire men and thus to build up a happier and sweeter human home on this ancient earth.

"The great hearts of the olden time
Are beating with you full and strong;
All holy memories and sublime
And glorious round you throng.

The truths ye urge are borne abroad
By every wind and tide;
The voice of Nature and of God
Speaks out upon your side.

The weapons which your hands have found
Are those which Heaven itself has wrought,
Light, Truth, and Love—your battle-ground,
The free, broad field of Thought."

VI

THE RELIGION OF THE NEW DEMOCRACY

THE task that falls to me—never an easy one, but all the harder after having attempted to fulfil it on so many occasions—is to endeavour to say a few helpful words to the men who have completed their work as students in this place, and who are about to enter upon the spheres of labour which they have chosen for their life's vocation. That we, who have watched their progress, and who have sympathised with their struggles to gain the scholar's outlook and the philosopher's wide and luminous view, wish them every joy and happiness in their future calling goes, I trust, without the saying. They are embarking upon a mission in which a vast procession of forerunners have been engaged, and the very message they have to deliver is wrapt in the scriptures of an earlier world, so that to have spent some preparatory years in communing with the minds of the past, and in learning what these have taught respecting the momentous facts of life and death, of good and evil, of man and nature, is a fitting prelude to undertaking the trust that will be laid upon them and of trying to discharge its duties faithfully and well.

This, however, is no ordinary moment of our national history at which we are bidding them

god-speed. The Vice-Chancellor of the University of London told the newly-made graduates of the present year[1] that they would live to see changes greater both politically and socially than any which had taken place in England since the seventeenth century. He assured them that the question of the distribution of wealth would almost entirely occupy public attention during the next fifty years, and he impressed upon them the necessity of their doing their share towards forming the minds of the men who are going to settle that perplexing question—adding that "if we settle it without bloodshed it will be as much as we shall do." He referred, again, to the huge problems that are confronting us in respect to the machinery of legislation and administration. "Six hundred years we spent in delimiting and defining the rights of monarchy; in the next hundred and fifty years we tested and discarded oligarchy; since 1832 we have been testing and improving and discussing—and we have not anything like finished yet—democracy." No discriminative observer of recent events can have any doubt as to the opportuneness of these words. Who of us really supposes that the mechanism of government can long continue as it is now? Who of us is not persuaded that the very liberty upon which we pride ourselves is on its trial and that the coming years may possibly witness its serious and inevitable curtailment? Everywhere the issue is being forced upon us—is the democracy in truth capable of bearing the strain that

[1] *I.e.*, 1914.

is being imposed upon it? Will it prove equal to the demands which a preponderating influence in directing the course of civilisation is reposing upon it? Devotion to moral and social ideals, loyalty to causes and to principles of far-reaching scope and bearing, disinterestedness in its methods and modes of action—all these things, and many more, are required of it, if it is to succeed, where other means of guiding the destinies of nations have failed. Will it rise to the height of its vast opportunities, and know "the seasons when to take occasion by the hand, and make the bounds of freedom wider yet?" It is hard, if not impossible, to say; but even those who most of all wish it well have, at the present moment, no little ground for hesitation and fear. There is a spirit of restlessness abroad, a disposition to set at defiance the lawful authority of those who have been selected to rule, a kind of reckless indifference towards the community or the state, in contrast with what are taken to be the interests of a class or the aims of a party; and one need not be a political pessimist if tendencies such as these awaken in his mind feelings of uneasiness and disquietude.

The symptoms of which I speak have become too periodic in their appearance and too persistent in their drift to be any longer ignored or lightly dismissed. The "passive resister" who considers himself at liberty to treat with contempt a duly enacted law of the Statute Book, the suffragette who is willing to destroy priceless treasures of a nation's history in order to arouse attention to

the plea of "votes for women," the Ulster protestant who smuggles into the country fire-arms and ammunition in preparation for forcible opposition to what Parliament may decree, the huge combinations of trades unions, ready at a moment's notice to bring the industry of the country to a standstill unless the terms they formulate be unconditionally conceded—these are no trifling incidents of party warfare, but indications of underlying currents of popular sentiment which have been growing and maturing for some time past. I speak of these matters not for the purpose of foreboding impending ruin, or of suggesting, as some recent critics have done, that civilisation itself is in danger. I believe no such thing. In spite of the vagaries I have mentioned, and of others which I might mention, I have not lost my faith in the democracy nor my trust in the sanity and good sense of its truer mind. It is as yet new to its task. Its faults are largely the faults of youth. It is adventurous, daring, often imprudent; it is easily enticed by nostrums, easily led away by parrot cries. It has got many things to learn and not a few to unlearn. But it is sound at heart, susceptible to generous appeals, ready to be animated by lofty and worthy ends. And it can, I am persuaded, be brought to realise the fatal error of repeating what it takes to be the vice of each of the ruling classes of previous ages—of legislating, namely, merely in its own interests. Nor is it so blind as not to be able to see that for any section or clique of persons to resort to brute violence or terrorism,

in order to achieve its object, spells in the long run disaster to popular government and contradicts the central principle of a democratic state. What the democracy sorely needs is insight into the way in which these temptations are to be avoided, and these mischievous devices of propaganda to be rendered futile and inoperative in a self-respecting community.

You, Gentlemen, sheltered here as for a while you have been in the quiet retreat of academic seclusion, are going now to the people. If what I have been saying has in it any degree of justification, you will have plenty of work to do, and many varieties of men and women to serve. Go to them with an earnest, rational, and living conviction of the reality, the value, and the primacy of spiritual verities, and recognition and response will meet you in ample measure. Gradually but surely the toiling millions of our population are reaching the consciousness that nothing can save the democratic constitutions of the future from becoming the most remorseless and unmitigated of tyrannies except the spontaneous feeling of fellowship and brotherhood amongst those who are at once the governors and the governed, and a common attachment on their part to truths and aspirations which elevate human life above the sphere of the material and the animal, and render manifest its kinship with the spiritual and the divine. No doubt these toiling millions, looking back upon what has been, are convinced that for generations a dire yoke has been laid upon them which they ought never to have been

suffered to bear. No doubt they are embittered by the reflexion that, during the period immediately preceding our own, myriads of human lives have been sacrificed to human greed, that the parasites of the race have been thriving upon the misery of their fellows. Yet they are beginning to know now, and to be persuaded, that, at last, the further flow of this older order of things has been stemmed. Awakened, at length, to a sense of their manhood, the multitudes have found a voice. Unheeded in the past, they are going to be heard in the future. And it is not surprising that, under the circumstances, the first utterances of the newly enfranchised should be frequently those of angry protest, of scornful reproach, of extravagant claims; the surprising thing rather is the restraint, the moderation, the forbearance that usually characterise their utterances. A century of wrong is bound to engender a certain amount of retaliation. But what, I think, impresses an impartial observer as the most striking feature of the whole movement is the evident feeling that fills the minds of the populace of their present inadequacy of equipment, of their narrowness of vision, of their unpreparedness for the great tasks which they are being called upon to discharge. They feel that the best that is in them is at present thwarted and obstructed, and that they themselves are not sure of it. Their lives appear to them to be frittered away and dissipated in little things. They are tied down, like Gulliver amongst the Lilliputians, by innumerable tiny and invisible threads, and,

although the outer cords that bound them are cut, they are not yet free. Others are at liberty to follow the Grail, as thinkers, as artists, as scholars, but they are not. Their souls are too often cribbed, cabined, and confined; they are uncertain of the light they ought to see and of the ends at which they ought to aim.

Here, then, for you, bearers of the Christian gospel, is at once a mission and a glorious opportunity of proving that the faith you cherish can meet the needs—the large and crying needs—of the present age. With unerring insight, Matthew Arnold declared long ago that "the difficulty for democracy is how to find and how to keep high ideals," and once again that difficulty is being illustrated to us on every side. A free society requires beyond all else to be conscious of the true character of the environment in the midst of which its freedom is to be developed. Its freedom must be a religious freedom, and not simply a political one. And this means that superstition must give way to knowledge, that love must cast out fear, that the bondsman must become self-dependent and aware of the dignity of his own self-hood. The thought of a spiritual community of human beings under the Divine Paternity, the conception of men as brothers which follows upon that thought, the assurance that we are not as a race of summer flies who are to perish in a few brief days—these convictions form, it seems to me, an essential foundation for any worthy and enduring democracy—the only foundation upon which the great political principles

of liberty, equality, and fraternity will in the long run be able securely to rest. And to lead ordinary men and women so to believe in God, that they may gauge to some extent the infinite possibilities of human nature; to so kindle their powers of reflection as to enable them to recognise the inherent capacities of the individual soul, to love and understand its good, and through its good to conquer its evil; to reveal to them the vast travail of the race working out, through sin and sorrow, the new humanity that is to be; to point them to the root ideas on which a thinking, feeling, aspiring mind is reared, and to which the wondrous variety of its activities can be referred —such is the function that falls to-day to the Christian teacher, and for its efficient discharge nothing short of an unswerving loyalty to truth and a fixed resolve to avoid temporizing with it will, indeed, avail.

A *Christian* teacher, I say, and I have said so advisedly. For it does seem to me that if the religious principles of which I have been speaking —the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the immortality of the finite soul, the supremacy of love—are to be presented with the persuasive power with which they are capable of being presented, they require to be conceived in concrete embodiment, in a human personality; in one of ourselves, to whom we can look up as the leader of our pilgrim-troop into the ways of peace and blessedness. Say, if you will, that God can never have been without a witness of Himself in the minds and hearts of

men. I grant the contention to the full. I believe that witness to have been borne by those who have been faithful to the teaching of Confucius as well as by those who have been faithful to the teaching of Christ. I believe that the calm speculation of Greek philosophers was part of the divine method for the education of the human race no less than the rapt utterances of Hebrew prophecy. Yes; I yield to no one in acknowledging indebtedness to the sages of classic antiquity and to the saints of civilisations other than our own. But we, who have been nurtured in the conceptions and ideals of a great tradition, we, who from earliest childhood have caught the accents of one voice and have been drawn in tenderest devotion to the feet of a common master—we cannot but acknowledge the one overtowering personality that for two thousand years has been the inspiration of all that is best and purest in the civilisation to which we belong. His words of trust and assurance come home to our hearts as no other words have done or can do. And if to-day we are able to stand fearlessly and confidingly in the presence of God, it is Christ who has brought us there. If, in any imperfect way, we have attained to the level of divine sonship, it has been in and through the strength of his spirit, by the influence of his life and character. And recognising this, as we cannot but do, why need we be concerned to question the orthodoxy of those who can no longer accept as the authentic guarantee of Christ's authority a miraculous pre-eminence that would remove him from

the fellowship of mortals? The divinity of Christ may be a fact, and a stupendous fact, even though no supernatural efficacy ever issued from him; he proved himself to be the Son of God, not by changing water into wine, nor even by raising Lazarus from the dead, but by converting the sinful into the saintly, and by shedding the light of what is eternal upon the transient years of our earthly lot.

Discipleship to Christ has, in short, nothing whatever to do with any metaphysical doctrine that may be entertained concerning his precise relationship to deity. Suffer me here to use the glowing words of a distinguished modern theologian in order to make clear what I mean. "Jesus may," he says, "have been greeted at his birth by pæans of angels, or simply have sprung, as other men, from the pure wedded love of two human hearts. Jesus may have risen radiant from the baffled tomb, or for him, as for other men, the sepulchre may have proved relentless. I, for my part, hold him no exception to the rule the wise man laid down of old, 'All men have one entrance into life and the like going out of it.' But, though no choir of angels greeted his infant cry, though no portent of rent veil or lowering darkness marked his last dying cry, though nature yielded to his hand no manner of obedience, she will not yield to men of common clay, though gem after gem be torn from the garland of shining myth that decks his head, and only the wreath of thorns be left pressing on his throbbing brow; yet to have in us for one

moment pure and strong and full that kingdom of God which found lodgment in his soul would be to have risen above every orthodoxy on which the Church has built her pride and every heresy against which she has plied her scourge. I know not the details of this man's days, I have no means of laying down any dogma about his sheer impeccability. How should I? I doubt not, moments of human weakness shook even his incomparable spirit. But I do know that could this race of striving, struggling, sinning, sorrowing men rise to the height of his superb and gracious manhood, and touch the glory of his communion with the Father, that would be the coming of the New Jerusalem more nearly than any other thing that I can dream of." If there be any stronger testimony than that which is here borne to Christ's divine sonship, I confess that I, in my wanderings through the mazes of doctrinal theology, have never yet succeeded in finding it. And what I would urge now is that it is a reverence for Jesus such as is thus evinced which will impart to your teaching the fervour and the vitality it must have, if it is to touch the hearts and hallow the affections of the men and women of the new democracy. They need an exemplar in whom all that is august and tender and beautiful in humanity is gathered and harmoniously blended and made manifest. And the personality of Christ, living a life entirely holy, "native to heaven, yet blossoming on earth," and dying in simple trust and pure obedience to the Father's will, "loving nothing but what is dear to God

and severe only to the guilt that is beneath his frown "—such a spirit will bear down upon them, across the centuries, with a force and convincingness which neither the whispers of the natural heart nor the thunders of a supernatural revelation can ever exercise or wield.

"Does the fish soar to find the ocean,
The eagle plunge to find the air—
That we ask of the stars in motion
If they have rumour of thee there?

Not where the wheeling systems darken,
And our benumbed conceiving soars,
The drift of pinions, would we hearken,
Beats at our own clay-shuttered doors.

The angels keep their ancient places,
Turn but a stone, and start a wing!
'Tis ye, 'tis your estrangèd faces
That miss the many-splendoured thing.

But (when so sad thou canst not sadder)
Cry;—and upon thy so sore loss
Shall shine the traffic of Jacob's ladder
Pitched betwixt Heaven and Charing Cross.

Yea, in the night, my soul, my daughter,
Cry, clinging Heaven by the hems;
And lo! Christ walking on the water
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames!"

That, then, is, I take it, the essence of the Christianity you are going to carry to the seeking anxious minds of the present time. Am I asked, in conclusion, what measure of recognition will in the long run accrue to the faithful and humble servant of Christ, who, in the manner I have been indicating, spends himself and is spent in trying to promote and to extend the influence of the

Christian gospel? The industrious tradesman or lawyer or medical practitioner may look forward to securing as a result of his toil some years of leisure and freedom in which he may rest upon his oars, and enjoy the pleasures that fall in his way, and even the man of science or of letters may nurture at least the hope that appreciation of a public kind may perchance crown his efforts to increase the sum of human knowledge. As the culmination of your labours, I dare not hold out any such prospects as these. Society is not seldom a stern taskmaster, and often persists in repaying those who have been its most eager and zealous workers in the coin on which they have set chief value. And you—you who have dedicated yourselves to the ministry of Christ—must not repine at assuming the yoke of Christ's service upon the terms on which you will be recommending to others the acceptance of his message. Will you not tell your people that trust in God is its own most precious reward, that "the richest joy that love can bring is more love, deeper love, love that grows with what it feeds upon"? Be prepared, therefore, to adopt as the criterion by which you will test the success of your own personal endeavours the same high principle of judgment. It probably will not fall to the lot of any one of you to catch the ears of crowded and spell-bound congregations, nor to draw down upon yourself your country's admiring gaze. But if, in course of a humble ministry, it be your good fortune to hear, perhaps from some hard working emigrant in the wilds of Australia,

that your words have come back to him in the bush; or if some poor sempstress at her work, in a dingy alley of one of our smoky cities, confesses that but for your faith in God and goodness she would have sunk into the depths of misery and despair—you will not repine; you will be grateful that your life has not been spent in vain. For you, witness such as that should be a rich reward. It should fill your heart with the peace that may rise often to a sense of joyous content. It should strengthen in you, whenever in your inmost soul you realise its meaning, the power to believe in the right, and to be convinced of the supremacy of goodness in the economy of the universe. It should be to your whole manhood, and to every part of it, a source of satisfaction such as few other experiences in this world are able to supply. For, however much around you the voices of criticism, of dissent, and of cynicism may rage—and these are never likely wholly to be silent—this is the assurance, the priceless assurance, that to you has been vouchsafed a measure of the Christly spirit, and that you have won a place in that immortal company of the world's benefactors of some of whom the poet tells:—

"Aye, unto these distributeth the Giver
Sorrow and sanctity and loves them well,
Grants them a power and passion to deliver
Hearts from the prison-house and souls from hell."

VII

ATONEMENT FOR THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

You remember how Tennyson relates that when, after the death of his friend, the time drew near the birth of Christ, he could hardly endure the thought of the festival. "With trembling fingers did we weave," he says, "the holly round the Christmas hearth." A feeling in some measure akin to the feeling thus described comes over me in setting out to-day[1] upon the attempt to fulfil the task that devolves upon me. Whilst we are in the throes of the ghastly struggle in which the nations of the earth are pitted against one another, and whilst even the devoutest of men are convinced that nothing but a decisive defeat of one or other of the contending hosts on the stricken field—and we know what that means—can be of avail to bring to a termination the direst calamity which has ever befallen the human race, one feels it must wear the appearance of the merest bathos to commend to you the work of a ministry, the root principle of which is being set at defiance before your eyes on a scale never before paralleled. Does it not seem as though, after the labour of centuries, the Christian ministry had now demonstrated its futility and shown its powerlessness to guide the

[1] June 21st, 1917.

conduct and actions of men? Indeed, not a few of the ablest and most conscientious minds in our midst are expressing that opinion in the clearest and plainest of terms. You, it is true, are believers in the Christian gospel still; but your brothers and relatives, your friends and companions, how many of them are declaring that Christianity is a spent force, and wholly inadequate to cope with the social and spiritual issues of modern life!

I am not going to appear before you as an apologist for the Christian faith—a rôle for which I am quite unfitted, and which happily here there is no need for me to assume. But, as I was meditating about a theme that might form the substance of my message to you to-day, there came to my mind the wonderfully fresh and stimulating re-interpretation of many of the cardinal principles of Christianity which we owe to the distinguished American teacher who has recently passed away, Josiah Royce. The two volumes of which I am thinking were published a year before the war; but in the striking argument with which the first volume concludes there seems to me to be opened out a line of reflexion that in these dark hours of expert barbarism has yet a deeper significance than could have been discerned at the time in which it was unfolded even by the author himself.

The argument to which I allude is this. Professor Royce is attempting to render intelligible for the men and women of our generation the Pauline doctrine of the Atonement. He recog-

nises that the traditional theological ways of interpreting, or rather of misinterpreting, St. Paul's conception do it, in fact, the most grievous injustice. The supposition, for example, that Christ through his suffering and death, contrived to appease the wrath of Divine Justice, and to pay the penalty which is due from the sinful, exhibits, as he sees, an utter want of appreciation of the essential moral problem involved. The guilty soul, when it is truly conscious of its guilt, yearns not for the accidental pacification of an angry God; it yearns for reconciliation with itself, for restoration to that life which was once its inheritance but which now has been deliberately thrown aside. And even the more refined moral theories of atonement, such as that delineated in the beautiful little book with which Sabatier ended his life's work, do not really get to the core of the matter.

Have patience with me, then, whilst I try to state, in as simple and direct a manner as I can, the momentous problem as it presented itself to Royce, and his method of solving it. "The modern man," according to a recent description of him, is "the man who does not believe in hell, and who is too busy to think about his own sins." This attitude, on the part of the modern man, Royce was ready to admit, is, to a considerable extent, justifiable. In respect to most of the ordinary misdeeds of life, Matthew Arnold's advice to muse no more upon them than is indispensable for the firm effort to get rid of them is healthy and sensible advice. Blunders of all

sorts may, for example, have filled our childhood and youth, and yet in that maze of past folly and evil-doing we may have been either victims of our nature and of our training or else blind followers of false gods. And as, in maturer years, we look back upon these incidents, it may well be the part not only of wisdom but of actual duty to avoid brooding over them, to resolve simply once for all to put them aside and have done with them. For, in such cases, remorse or self-torture is frequently a pure waste of time, bygones had better be treated as bygones, and the escapades of a misguided past be forgotten and ignored, except in so far as a memory of them helps to prevent their repetition. Die to the old life, awaken to the new, may be, and often is, the road to salvation. But Royce maintains, and I think with unquestionable truth, that there are forms of wilful moral iniquity in reference to which Matthew Arnold's advice is altogether unavailing. There is such a thing as the "unpardonable sin," the sin, as Christ called it, "against the Holy Spirit." Many expositors of the gospels have essayed to determine its nature, and I doubt not some of you have exercised your minds upon it. I should, however, be surprised to hear that any more penetrative diagnosis of the nature of this moral condition has been attempted than that to which Royce has submitted it. Think, he says in effect, think of a man, engaged either in business or professionally or otherwise, morally mature enough to get his life coloured through and through by

what seems to him to be a genuinely illuminating moral faith, imagine him to have discovered for himself an ideal that furnishes, according to his own estimate, the cause he loves most, the cause of his life, that to which he is conscious he must, if he is to be true to himself, devote his thought, his solicitude, his whole-hearted service. Such a man will be bound so to arrange his ideas of right and wrong as to know that there are, at least, some acts the doing of which by him would involve for him a kind of moral suicide—a deliberate wrecking of everything which makes his life for himself morally worth while. Suppose, then, that he who has thus seen the light and voluntarily chosen to serve it comes, in a moment of wilful perversity, to close his eyes, and to commit, by his own free choice, an act of disloyalty to his own ideal, to betray the very cause to which he had solemnly pledged his fidelity. Later, like the prodigal in the parable, the traitor will, no doubt, come to himself again. It will, however, be vain and useless then to counsel him to plunge into Lethe, to forget all about his act of treason, and to do good deeds innumerable the which to set over against it. In its own way, that counsel may be good and practical enough, but it is totally out of place in the present instance. "Tell me not," the man will reply, "to 'get rid' of just that sin. That is exactly what I cannot do. I am, and to the end of time I must remain, the doer of that wilfully ignoble deed. Whatever other value I may get for other actions, that value I retain for ever." By his own deed of

deliberate unfaithfulness, the traitor has, in fact, consigned himself, as the doer of that deed, to what may be called with literal accuracy the "hell of the irrevocable." In a sense, of course, all deeds are irrevocable; but only a deed of the nature indicated has stamped upon it the character of what the man's own will had denoted as the for him "unpardonable sin," and it is in respect to such sins that the "hell of the irrevocable" is veritably a hell indeed.

Is, now, an atonement for a sin of this description conceivable? Is a reconciliation of even the traitor to his truer self and to his former world a possibility? His deed, be it noted, concerns not himself alone; it concerns the community of which he was a voluntary member. There may, indeed, be many traitors, and the community may be in the dark as to who the traitors are. But if that which is precious to it has been wrecked, it will know, at least, that treason there has been. The problem of reconciliation is, accordingly, a problem for the wounded and shattered community, much more than for those who have caused it. The lost causes, the tragedies, the chaos which the deeds of traitors produce—these constitute the heart of the sorrow of the higher regions of our human world. Can, then, a genuinely spiritual community so rise above the treason as to bring about something that shall atone for the spiritual disasters which the very being of treason both constitutes and entails? Can any soul of goodness spring forth, or be created out of, this evil thing, and serve, at least

in some measure, to reconcile the community to the irrevocable wrong that has been done? In brave, confident, and convincing tones, Professor Royce answers these questions with an emphatic "Yes." See, he urges, how great calamities are for all but the traitors themselves great opportunities! See how lost causes have furnished, times beyond number, the foundations and the motives of humanity's most signal moral victories! The treason has done its last and its most cruel work, and lies with what it has destroyed dead in the tomb of the irrevocable past. And then suddenly there emerges that triumph of the creative will of the best of men which, although it cannot annul the tragedy, can yet produce a veritably atoning fact in the world and in the community of traitors. The servants of the good, those who remain faithful to the ideal that has been slighted--these may devise and carry out some new deed, or deeds, for which just this iniquity has furnished the opportunity, and may thus transfigure the very loss into a gain which, without such loss, could never have been won. And, when you can look down upon the human world after that creative and renovative work has been achieved, and can say: "The world, as transformed by this creative deed, is nobler and better than it would have been had that treasonable wrong not have been done"—then, in truth, you have witnessed an act of Atonement in its purest form, then you realise not only what wickedness can do to wreck but what the free spirit of righteousness can do to save.

It is a great and uplifting thought, and a thought which, as I have said, is pregnant with meaning at the present time. Let me not be misunderstood. There is nothing, so far as I can see, that can excuse or palliate the criminal guilt of those, whoever they may be, who are really responsible for the occurrence of this war. Get behind its immediate causes, do what you will to prove its inevitableness, make the best of its justifications, try your hardest to mitigate its horrors, yet the actual letting loose upon us of the weapons of destruction still remains an infamous act of treason against our common humanity—an act of treason more unspeakable and appalling, far, than the worst tyrants of former ages ever managed to perpetrate. And what it would involve must have been, to a large extent, obvious to those who plunged us into this hideous business. They could not but have foreseen that the most they could ever hope to gain would be but a pitiable recompense for the terrible damage to civilisation it was bound to entail. They cannot now arrest the malignant forces they have released from restraint; the evil they have done to mankind it is beyond their power to retrieve. For them there is no place of repentance though they seek it carefully with tears. Most assuredly, then, if these men ever cherished an ideal even of patriotism, that they have betrayed it cannot be questioned: the "unpardonable sin" lies on their conscience—the sin "against the Holy Spirit."

Of argument, surely, none is needed to bring

home to us the enormity of the crime. Has it not been borne in upon you during the last few weeks how the serene grandeur and peaceful solemnity of the process of creation has been throwing into vivid relief the ugly and frightful devastation that is being wrought by the hand of man? Men are engaged in destroying that which Nature has been lavishly working to produce. We have been passing through a late spring and early summer so beautiful as almost to defy description. Never have "the splendour in the grass and glory in the flower" been more conspicuously displayed. The sweet light of each returning dawn, the fading effulgence of the setting sun, the mantle of loveliness which invests earth and sea and sky—these have all been spread around us in rich profusion. Nature herself—Nature,

> "Who never negligently yet
> Fashioned an April violet,
> Nor would forgive, did June disclose
> Unceremoniously the rose,"

—seems to have done her best to make us realise the madness of the folly which is turning her wondrous agencies into engines of destruction. Gradually, and by the labour of centuries, we have reached the stage of being able to interpret her ceaseless flow of life and energy. We have come to find in every minute organism, in every trembling leaf, in every fragile flower, the manifestation of law, of an order, a teleology, that transports us into the very presence of a divine intelligence. Gradually, and by the labour of centuries, we have learnt to take Nature into our

confidence, until we have become masters of the pathway of the seas, won dominion over the air, are able to stem the ravages of disease, and to employ the invisible forces of the universe as instruments of our will. And, suddenly, all our science, all our knowledge, all our wealth, both intellectual and material, are being diverted from their beneficent purpose; physicists are busy inventing swifter aircraft, chemists are devising more deadly explosives, and almost everyone who can is scheming fresh means whereby to slay and kill. Talk as you will about Nature being "careful of the type," and "careless of the single life," yet the contrast between her ways and ours, at this time, is vast enough to awaken in our minds some approximate estimate of the evil that is happening.

In the midst, then, of a crisis when it is not too much to say civilisation itself is upon its trial, you, Gentlemen, are going forth to be the bearers of the Christian gospel to a world thus lacerated and shattered by reason of treason and unfaithfulness to the spirit of man. You need not to be reminded that the Master to whom your allegiance has been given was no mere representative of national pride, but the revealer of human brotherhood in the widest and most comprehensive sense of that word. The Kingdom of which he announced the coming was to have no territorial boundaries; it implied the establishment of a moral community in which love and charity should bind together in fraternal fellowship men of all nationalities. By the irony of fate, he, who was destined to become the greatest inspirer of the

human centuries, himself fell a victim to the fury of a fanatical exclusiveness such as is once more blinding the eyes and hardening the hearts of men. Yet he gave his life as a ransom for many; and his crucifixion has meant for the world a transformation such as would not have been effected had that treasonable wrong not been done. Can you, then, whose aim it will be to follow so far as may be in his footsteps—can you, in some slight measure, repeat, in your lives, his function of a redeemer, and carry on the work he initiated by contributing your humble share towards the creation of that good which shall be the community's atonement for the treason by which certain of its members have darkened the beginning of the twentieth century of Christendom? Such, as I conceive it, is the sort of question which he who is assuming the yoke of Christ may well put to himself at this hour.

I am no prophet, but I venture to predict that your opportunities will be great. With all its frightfulness, the war has been, in one sense, a tremendous purgative; it has cleared away much of the dust that was tending to obscure and falsify our view of contemporary human life. It has revealed capacities of heroism and self-sacrifice we should hardly have dared previously to trust to or reckon upon. Those who feared—and there were many who did—that the old spirit of unselfish devotion to disinterested ends was dying out amongst us have at least discovered the fear to be groundless. That the youth of our own or of any other country have been induced to face the un-

paralleled hardships and dangers of the modern battlefield merely by a craving for excitement, by the love of adventure, or by the animal instinct of pugnacity, is a contention which it is impossible to sustain. All these things may have had, and I doubt not have had, their influence. But it is idle to insist that motives such as these have been the motives which have fired the courage and fixed the determination of the men who form the large majority of the citizen armies now contending with each other. The Asquiths, the Rupert Brookes, the Sorleys, the Pringle-Pattisons, the Lodges, and the thousands like them, who have laid down their lives at the call of duty, did not meet their deaths under the sway of impulses of that kind. No; in the spiritual as in the physical world there is such a thing as latent or potential energy, activity that is more or less locked up and unapparent until conditions present themselves that call for its manifestation. And then, when the hour of emergency has come, an access of hitherto undeveloped power seems to accrue to men. Given the moment that demands high moral fortitude and strenuous exertion, and we get strange and unexpected revelations of the nobility of human character.

Yes; revelations of that sort are now daily and hourly occurring, as almost ordinary events which are naturally to be expected. Now you have had demonstrated in a manner that admits of no question the inner depths of dignity and strength which many of the souls to whom your appeal will be made contain. The uneventful

lives they had formerly lived, the commonplace routine of every-day experience, had hidden more or less from view their spiritual power, but now you know that it is there. What, then, can you make of it in the great work of social and moral reconstruction that will sooner or later await us with appalling magnitude and imperativeness? Can you keep it alive, can you keep it operative, for the purpose of undertaking and effecting perhaps the most tremendous task which humanity has ever had to face? Can you convince those that return from the Front, and from the factories and munition works, that the ideals to be realised, the deeds to be accomplished, the ends to be reached, here in the home-land and along the peaceful ways of human existence, will really need all the heroism, all the self-sacrifice, all the devotion, that is now being exhibited so plentifully in the trenches, or wherever the strife for victory is being pursued? If, in any slight degree, you can help to do that—if by your own enthusiasm for the cause of truth and righteousness, by the persuasiveness of your plea for it, by the zest with which you are serving it, you can keep alive the living flame to which I have alluded, and direct it along the roads where it will be a means of sweetening and purifying and elevating the England that is to be—then, veritably, you will be offering atonement for the unpardonable sin, then you will have contributed your mite towards the creation of a new good that would not have been had this wrong not been done.

How great, then, the responsibility resting

upon those who are to be the exponents of the Christian faith in this grave epoch of our history! There is a very real and very threatening danger that, so soon as the stress and strain of this war is over, it will be followed, as has so often been the case after other wars, by a period of reaction, when a feeling of apathy will supervene, and a new generation will grow up listless and enfeebled, under the weight of a load of exhaustion and impoverishment. Do you strive with might and main to avert a disaster like that. It would mean a deterioration which would be for long fatal to the progress of our race. Brave and dauntless spirits have served the Church in the ages of the past, and, as we now know, brave and dauntless spirits are not wanting to serve it in our day. More than ever before is it necessary that their word should be with power, their message true, their vision clear, their thought convincing. Be you, then, through and through sincere, of single aim and steadfast purpose, and pray that in these times of anxiety it may be granted you to speak with something of the prophet's fervour and to keep your eyes fixed upon the goal of the reign of Heaven upon Earth.

"God give us men! A time like this demands
Great hearts, strong minds, true faith and hands!
Men whom the best of office does not kill:
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy:
Men who have honour, men who will not lie.
For while the rabble, with their thumb-worn creeds,
Their large professions, and their little deeds,
Wrangle in selfish strife, lo! Freedom weeps,
Wrong rules the land, and waiting Justice sleeps."

VIII

MODERNISM IN THEOLOGY

It has become customary in recent discussion to talk a good deal of what is called "modernism" in religion and in theological science. But the term "modernism" is an ambiguous term, and in some of its significations it certainly does not express the point of view which it is the aim of our little college to represent. There is, however, a sense of the term that might legitimately enough be said to indicate the underlying thought upon which the teaching here is based. And the thought I have in mind may perhaps best be brought out by contrasting it with that to which it stands opposed. In surveying, as students of theology are bound to do, the past epochs of human history, there is engendered a tendency, almost inevitable, to depreciate the present. The cares and anxieties, the troubles and tragedies, into the midst of which we are now plunged, constrain us to look back in regretful retrospect upon former ages that were simpler, less insipid, more thrilling. It is not a new sentiment, this; on the contrary, it has been more or less prevalent ever since human history began. For example, an ancient Egyptian papyrus which dates from the year 3000 B.C., contains a reference to the

"good old times," and a lament over the degeneracy of the times in which it was written. The truth is, of course, that we fill up our picture of the past with the things of interest which it presents; imagination clothes it with the romantic charm of these features alone; and the commonplace, the dull, even to a large extent the stupid, the brutal and the horrible drop out of sight. In a similar manner, the traveller, who is carried swiftly through a region of country hamlets, sees the life of which he is only catching fleeting glimpses as a life of unruffled peace and contentment, although closer inspection would soon reveal that here too the worries and hardships, the sorrows and pains, incident to our human lot, are in truth no less in evidence than elsewhere. So, also, is it, and in a very pronounced way, in respect to the religious consciousness. Almost with one accord we are bidden to turn our gaze upon what took place hundreds of years ago in order to find the ground of any faith we can possibly cherish; the very strength of our case lies, we are told, there: take away the support we derive from the marvellous events of bygone ages, and what would become of our assurance of things divine? And thus the persuasion is readily engendered that, while the men of those days had the best of reasons for believing as they did, while we too, had we been there would certainly have shared their conviction, yet, situated as we are, we must take their evidence upon trust, having none of our own on which it is safe to rely.

"While we believed, on earth he went,
And open stood his grave.
Men call'd from chamber, church and tent,
And Christ was by to save.

Now he is dead! Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town;
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down."

The consequence is that our worship partakes too often of the character, as has been truly said, of a "commemoration," a "monument of absent realities," and "serves at best to keep alive, like an anniversary, the remembrance of things else fading in the distance." Now, "modernism," in the sense I am meaning, is the antithesis of all this. Not that it would have us venerate less than others do the great intellects of former ages; not that it would drag us away from communion with the minds of those who have seen further than we could ever have seen without them into the essence of the divine truth and beauty and goodness that encompasses the spirit of man. Least of all would it cast aside, as though outworn, the gospel narratives of that brief earthly life, which changed the current of human history, and the deep significance of which the reflexion of two thousand years has not been able to exhaust. But it refuses to acknowledge that revelation happened merely once upon a time, in the far away centuries, or to sanction the belief that the Divine Being, having formerly disclosed himself to the spirits that sought him then, has since retired from our portion, at least, of the universe, and left

succeeding generations of men and women to gain knowledge either of his existence or of his nature only at second hand. Capricious action of that sort is inconsistent with any notion the modernist thinker can form of Deity; and it seems to him you might as well now relinquish theism altogether as attempt to limit the period of divine revelation to some special episodes, however glorious, of the ages that are gone. For the truth is that the older voices of the Spirit cannot speak articulately save to the ear that is open to the new; and he who is incredulous of present-day revelations, he who can only discover the "word of God" on the shelf of ancient literature, is destitute of the very insight that is requisite for interpreting the sacred records of the past. "If," declared one of the profoundest of religious teachers, "if we cannot find God in your house and in mine; upon the roadside or the margin of the sea; in the bursting seed or opening flower; in the day-duty and the night-musing; in the genial laugh and the secret grief; in the procession of life, ever entering afresh, and solemnly passing by and dropping off; I do not think we should discern Him any more on the grass of Eden, or beneath the moonlight of Gethsemane."

This, I take it, is the root-principle of the "modernism" you have imbibed within these walls; and it means, and must mean, that for you the days of prophecy are not over, that great as may have been, and I hope has been, the inspiration you have derived from the religious geniuses of our race, you are now prepared and on

the alert for those that will come direct to you, that, in vindicating God's presence (say) with the Hebrew race, you will not make the mistake of arguing as though He had left the people of to-day with no tidings of His continued being. Even though the message you have to deliver be wrapt in the scriptures of an earlier world, you will not hesitate to extract it from what is local and obsolete, and make it live and breathe in the atmosphere of the present time. You will keep, in short, the ancient reverences without disparaging the modern light; and, with minds that have absorbed the lessons of the centuries, lie open to the intimations that are reaching us still, so that by their aid new ideas and fresh emotions may shape themselves for you with which to awaken in your fellows recognition of the spiritual realities that are now confronting them, and which are not mere relics of what have formerly been.

Let me venture, in this connexion, upon a somewhat rash comparison. The picture has more than once been drawn of how, when at the beginning of the nineteenth century, poetry in England had become stiff and didactic and critical, when its imagination and passion were well-nigh dead, and it had nothing in it to move the world, Wordsworth came and led it back to sing of the common loves and common woes of human hearts, of the faith and hopes of simple folk, of the silent impulses that flow day by day from the natural world into the souls of the ignorant and the wise, and of how in consequence poetry was reborn.

"He found us when the age had bound
Our souls in its benumbing round;
He spoke, and loosed our heart in tears.
He laid us as we lay at birth
On the cool flowery lap of earth,
Smiles broke from us and we had ease;
The hills were round us, and the breeze
Went o'er the sunlit fields again;
Our foreheads felt the wind and rain.
Our youth return'd; for there was shed
On spirits that had long been dead,
Spirits dried up and closely furl'd,
The freshness of the early world."

It was a glorious mission to accomplish, and Wordsworth accomplished it. I am afraid the analogy I am about to suggest will strike you as a strained one, but I like to think of some such aim as that as the ideal which the liberal Christian minister should set before himself when he embarks upon his life's vocation. Certainly Matthew Arnold's lines might be applied, with scarcely any change of terms, to the ministry of Christ. There was then to be found in Jewish religion very much what Wordsworth found in English poetry,—a formalism that had undermined the vitality of the former faith, a number of traditional creeds and dogmas by which men had tried to confine illimitable ideas in the narrow formulæ of legal modes of expression, and a priesthood that had displaced spirituality for ceremonial and ritual. And Christ came, bidding men to return to the perennial fountains of experience, to the universal and common things of nature and of life, especially to the pure passion of love, which was to him of the very essence of God; and, in consequence,

religion was re-born. New ideals burst upon the world; old ideas took fresh form; and spring, after a long winter, revived the soul of humanity.

Such periods of decline and subsequent revival occur repeatedly in the history of the religious consciousness; and, unless I fail to discern the signs of the times, we are passing through one of them at the present juncture. The primary cause of the restless condition of Europe to-day is, so more than one observer has assured us, that something fundamental has gone wrong with man's conception of God. And these same observers proclaim their conviction that this condition will not be substantially alleviated until the current idea of God has been radically changed. For the kind of character that man has developed, the kind of life he lives, not only determines what his notion of God will be, but conversely his notion of God likewise determines how his character will develop and the kind of life he will lead. Now, I conceive that the main function lying before you as Christian ministers is, in its own way, precisely that which Christ, at the beginning of his ministry, perceived to be his main function,—that, namely, of purifying, enriching and elevating the thought of God as present to the popular mind. We cannot, it seems to me, emphasise too strongly that the entire worth and value of religion, its vitality, and redeeming power, centres round the conception of God and of God's relation to man. Let the conception of God degenerate into that of a gigantic potentate or of a supreme Judge of the world's Court of Assize,

and religion sinks into crude superstition and often into abject fear.

The greatness of Christ, his pre-eminence as a religious teacher, largely consisted in his keen and vivid realisation of this truth. It was not God as the Jehovah of the Israelites, it was not even God as the King Immortal, Invisible, whom no man hath seen or can see, that Christ revealed to us. The God he revealed was the Father of spirits, the Father of the huge human race, and the Father no less of each individual soul. He saw, as no one else had previously seen with his grasp and largeness of vision, the significance, in the great scheme of things, of the institution of the human family. He saw that the nearest analogy possible for us to contemplate of the relationship between God and ourselves is the relationship between the child and its father or mother. How simple that thought seems when thus expressed in words, and yet how deep and profound it really is! Christ set it forth in such a way as to cause it to influence human history as probably no other thought has ever done. He brought out its meaning in the clearest and most direct manner in which conceivably it could be brought out. People naturally plied him with questions. Do you actually intend to say, they asked him in effect, that every human being, the wicked no less than the righteous, the outcast no less than the upright, is a son of God? And he implicitly answered their questions by the parable of the prodigal. The exquisitely beautiful picture of the father waiting for the return of the child who

has wasted his substance in extravagance and luxury,—it is so familiar to us that we can scarcely realise what it must have meant for those to whom it came as a new birth of time. He left them to universalise the picture, to represent to themselves the Father in Heaven waiting for the return of the wandering human race and thus constituting the Household that was to be. He left them to apply it individually, knowing how in countless cases the story would make its appeal. But the point is that Christ's whole personality was centred upon that revelation, that his whole life was rooted in this faith in God as his Father.

Two thousand years have not sufficed to work out all that is implied in that stupendous conception, and to you the task will fall of interpreting it anew for the men and women of to-day, and of presenting it, in its inherent loveliness, in contrast to other and impossible conceptions that still linger on and are sufficiently prevalent. The cry for God is, indeed, the natural utterance of the awakened human soul everywhere and at all times. Be he what he may, man is constrained to be a seeker after God; the very exigencies of his life compel him to be that. In the severe trials of human existence, in its bereavements, common, though never commonplace, in the pain that comes from sundered friendships, in spiritual solitude and loneliness, men are driven to the search for a companionship more enduring than the world can give. Nor are their deeper experiences all sorrowful. Joy may be as profound as grief; and, out of the depth of joy, a

right-minded man longs to breathe forth his sense of gratitude. "The very essence of a human life is," as one of the Christian Fathers expressed it, "the vision of God." Yes; but natural and universal as is this cry, the notion that men even now entertain of the supreme source of soul-life tends frequently enough to revert to the idea of pre-Christian ages. Communities of people may still pay their homage to Him whom they have been taught to regard as the Master of their destinies under the firm conviction that if they do not punishment and disaster will befall them, as for the crime of *lèse-majesté*. Thousands of individuals still picture the divine being after the fashion of an oriental monarch—"a God for ever hearkening unto his self-commanded laud,"—or as a kind of omnipotent Magistrate, meting out rewards and penalties, according to deserts. For a reflective mind so crude an idea is, indeed, intolerable: sooner than be enslaved by it, he would reverence the majestic, even though unconscious, beauty of earth and sea and sky. And you, who are taking upon yourselves the yoke of Christ's service, have got to face this situation, face it in the way in which Christ has shown you how to face it. Of all men, the Christian minister must be no cynic, no pessimist, no creed-bound pedant. He must be a free-man of Christ, an unconquerable optimist, a great believer in great things. And such he can only be if his own thought of God is lofty and inspiring, sufficient to enable him to make men believe and feel that they live in a world, not under a despotic Ruler's law and

judgment, but under a Father's love and solicitude, under a Parent whose care for his offspring is unremitting and constant.

A great English philosopher, whose death we have had recently to deplore, has described the main work of the whole universe to be the "moulding of souls." The expression was taken from one of the letters of Keats. Keats pointed out that "the common cognomen of this world among the misguided and superstitious is 'a vale of tears,' from which we are to be redeemed by a certain arbitrary interposition of God and taken to Heaven." But, he exclaimed, what a little circumscribed and straitened notion this is! Call the world rather "the vale of soul-making," and you will be giving some account of the use of the world. How, then, he asked, are souls to be made? And his answer was that soul-making is effected by three grand materials, each acting upon the others for a series of years. These three materials are the intelligence, the human heart, and the world, or nature, suited for the proper action of mind and heart on one another. And thus, he thought, we can see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an intelligence and make it a soul,—a place where the heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways. The heart, he insisted, is the mind's Bible, the mind's experience, the text from which the mind or intelligence draws its identity. And this appeared to him a faint sketch of a system of salvation which does not offend our reason and humanity. Keats' meta-

phor was undoubtedly a striking and suggestive one. Dr. Bosanquet, the philosopher to whom I am alluding, urges, however, very truly that, while what we call external nature is wondrously adapted to the development and unfolding of a mental life, yet that which constitutes the essential environment of mind is not merely external nature but the social realm which has given rise to human individuals as we know them and to the institutions which have embodied the material of souls in the great creations of language, morality, art, science, and religion, wherein the worths and values of reality come at length to full expression.

Yes; but, in the "vale of soul-making," it is personal individual effort, personal individual influence, personal individual love and thought and solicitude, that pre-eminently count. Now, you are about to devote yourselves with hearts of faith and courage to this work of moulding souls. To fulfil the task effectively you will have, indeed, to break through the boundaries of a merely self-centred mind. In the simplicity of love and trust, you can, however, become organs of a diviner life than your own. You can testify and plead, gladden and console, not merely in words of your own choosing or in tones of your own voice, but as from a centre of consciousness that has transcended the sphere of its own finitude, and knows itself to be the medium of an authority no merely individual self can claim. The universe of the little man, it has been significantly said, is small, very powerless and niggardly; the universe of the great man is itself great, the instrument

of his purposes as well as the content of his intelligence. To live in the midst of the sensitive and moral experiences of your people, to awaken in them a facility of seeing that which is sweet and lovely in nature, in human thought and in the secret recesses of conscious being, to enrich them with a worthy and noble conception of the Father in whose keeping they are; where on earth can you find a higher calling, or one to which a good man would more willingly devote his allotted years and strength? Labour at it faithfully and conscientiously, and you will assuredly come to feel not only that you have conquered self but that you have done what is greater still, enabled others to conquer it.

IX

THE UPRISING OF YOUTH

I HAVE to speak more especially upon the work that awaits our students when they enter the ranks of the Christian ministry. The task is the more difficult because, although I have been engaged for a large part of my life in trying, in a humble way, to broaden the outlook and deepen the thought of not a few men who have been preparing for the ministerial calling, it is twenty years ago or more since I was myself in charge of a church and congregation. And during the past twenty years the world has changed—changed far more profoundly than in a period of like duration it has usually been in the habit of changing. So that were I to fall back upon my own ministerial experiences for the purpose of offering advice to you, I should probably be regarded as hopelessly out of date, and behind the times. My words, then, must necessarily be those of a layman who can only survey the scene more or less from the outside. But I draw consolation from the fact that the spectator often sees more of what is actually going on than those who are on the field of action, and that, therefore, if he views the scene with sympathetic eyes, his report may be of service to men about to plunge into the arena.

The world, I say, has changed enormously during the first quarter of the twentieth century. And, in this connexion, I am going to refer to a significant symptom that has recently been manifesting itself both here and on the Continent. One of the most striking features in the life of the German people at the present time is to be found in what is called the "Jugendbewegung"—the League of Youth—a movement that has been initiated and organised not by parents or teachers for the improvement of youth, but by the young people themselves. The movement was started some years before the outbreak of the war, and when the war began it was already probably more than half a million strong. After the war it immediately made rapid strides, and now it numbers many millions. It represents a revolt on the part of ardent and energetic young minds against the mere mechanism of modern civilisation, its sordidness and conventionalism, its materialism in thought and practice. From the commencement, the leaders of the movement have striven to preserve its spontaneity, to prevent its being labelled with the old party catchwords, such as Socialist or anti-Socialist, Militarist or Pacifist, orthodox or the reverse. It has emanated from the effort of youth to think for itself, to cut itself loose from the fetters of tradition, to return to a greater simplicity of life. "We believe," so certain sections have declared, "in shaking off all that is non-essential, and discovering our true selves—in shedding superficialities, secondary things, superfluous needs and pleasures,

the spirit of caste, separating man from man, and the spirit of nationalism—we would say,—Man, become truly human!" It is true that when the war came these enthusiastic young spirits threw themselves with eagerness and zest into what seemed to them to be beyond all question a righteous cause. But countless letters of members of the movement, written from the Front, have since been published, giving utterance to their profound sense of the appalling tragedy of the conflict, and their resolve to devote themselves, in the future, to the endeavour of remodelling the life of man. When an attempt was recently made to influence some of them in a Pan-German direction, they sent back the reply: "We don't want to belong to your world at all. How shall it profit us if we gain the whole of it and lose our own souls?"

Well, this "Jugendbewegung" is not confined to Germany. In a less articulate form, no doubt, it is spreading both in this country and in America. Earnest and reflective young minds in our midst are inspired by motives and aims not dissimilar to those to which I have been alluding. What is the explanation of it?

Partly, I think, this. These members of the rising generation discern so much in modern life that stifles the free play of spiritual power, so much that chains us down to a mere routine of material activity, in which the idealistic side of our nature is starved and crushed. We men and women of an earlier generation are so terribly busy. Money-making, trading, markets, appointments, committees, journeys, correspondence,

telegrams, telephones,—these make up such an incessant round in our day time, and are so absorbing and taxing and exhausting that the peaceful intervals of the spirit in which ideals come to birth are squeezed out, and we have no moments when

> "... with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."

We have become familiar with the story of how, during the countless ages of biological evolution, the animal has been developed into the human being. And now it would almost seem as though the process were going to end by the human being becoming developed at length into a machine, turning like a cog-wheel on its axis, or revolving like the belt that connects the engine with the loom. The "Jugendbewegung" is to no small extent a protest against a culmination of this description. The members of it realise that, where there is no steadying and stimulating ideal, human life degenerates into a slipshod thing, a mere hand-to-mouth existence, without dignity or aim beyond the treadmill occupation of the hour. "We young men and women," they are exclaiming, "must get out of this rut; we must enter into life itself." "We intend to take charge of our own lives, and to cut loose from the ugly conventions and moral inertia of the established order,"—so ran one of their proclamations; and they are up in arms against the commercialism, the deadening routine, the ruthless com-

petition of the society in which they find themselves. They are demanding "the shelter to grow ripe" that has not been "ours," the leisure, which we have not had, to grow wise.

Such, I believe, is one cause at least that has led to the initiation of the movement of which I have been speaking. Let me indicate what I take to be another. Towards the end of his long life—it was on his ninety-second birthday—that distinguished man, Alfred Russel Wallace, the co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of natural selection, was conversing with a friend, who, in the course of their conversation put to him the question, what, as he looked over the world from his vantage-ground of years, seemed to him to be chiefly wrong with it. "This," he replied gravely, "is its fundamental weakness: our knowledge, our science, has outstripped our moral development. We have become possessed of greater forces than we are morally fit to use. We have not sufficient self-control or goodwill to use these gigantic physical energies for the well-being of mankind, and are daily turning them into weapons of destruction." Russel Wallace did not live to experience the horrors of the war, but they confirmed only too literally the truth of his pronouncement. It is, I think, a sad and grievous reflection that within recent years the great strides in our knowledge of physical nature have been largely turned to account in perfecting the poison gas that will most effectively achieve its object, in inventing explosives that will the most unerringly spread abroad devastation and ruin, in contriving means

of locomotion that will the most deftly carry these to wherever they can do the greatest damage. But it is not this particular aspect of the picture upon which, at present, I wish to dwell. Do not suppose that I would for a single moment disparage by any word of mine the marvellous progress which the past half-century has witnessed in the domain of natural science. On the contrary I welcome what our scientists are doing with joy and thanksgiving; they appear to me to be opening out to us a vastly more impressive view of the physical universe than any of which our fore-fathers ever dreamed. Yet, I confess, when I contemplate the practical applications, the utilitarian devices, to which their discoveries may be turned, I am not without apprehension and misgiving. Some of you have probably read the suggestive little booklet that, under the title of "Daedalus," a well-known biologist has lately published on "Science and the Future," in which he depicts various directions in which, as he anticipates, theoretical science will find means of revolutionising human life. For example, it is, he thinks, a fairly safe prophecy that in fifty years there will be no night in our cities, the alteration of night and day being a check on the freedom of human activity, which applied physics will enable us to abolish. So, too, he predicts that when the coal mines of England have been exhausted, the country will be covered with rows of metallic windmills, working electric motors which, in their turn, will supply currents at a very high voltage to great electric mains. Again, he foresees the time when, with the production

of foodstuffs by chemical means, the agricultural labourer will disappear in favour of the factory worker, and mankind will be completely urbanised. Once more, from the practical application of physiological truths, he prophesies more startling developments still—developments which would mean the complete abolition of the family life, and of all that has hitherto been associated with the home. One need not, however, dip very far into the future in order to recognise that applied science is gradually transforming the entire face of our modern civilisation. It was only from a geographical point of view that Columbus discovered a new world. An actual new world has been in course of creation within the life-time of many of us, and under our very eyes. And the sort of danger that is confronting us is obvious enough. The very brilliance of intellectual originality which has been the means of unravelling the secrets of nature, and of interpreting the structure of the universe, is giving rise to a network of machinery that is tending to supersede the spontaneity of conscious activity, and to mechanise the minds that are engaged in working it. In short, the thought and reason of man—his highest endowment and distinctive prerogative—is often itself being employed in forging the chains that are to hold it captive, in creating the conditions under which it must pine and languish. Far-seeing minds have been warning us of this danger for a longer time than I can remember; and Mrs. Browning's words possess even more appropriateness to-day than when she wrote them fifty years ago :—

"We throw out acclamations of self-thanking, self-admiring,
With, for every mile run faster,—'O the wondrous, wondrous age!'
Little thinking if we work our souls as nobly as our iron,
Or if angels will commend us at the goal of pilgrimage.

If we trod the deeps of ocean, if we struck the stars in rising,
If we wrapped the world intensely with one hot electric breath,
'Twere but power within our tether, no new spirit-power comprising,
And in life we were not greater men, nor bolder men in death."

That it is which is at length coming to be realised by the members of the "Jugendbewegung," and it is at the root of their impatience with what they condemn as a worldly and decadent society, and of their reaction against what they describe as economic materialism, which pins its faith upon the mere machinery of civilisation, and has not so much as a phantom soul. "Let us get away from this deadening atmosphere," they cry, "and make a fresh start. Let us rejuvenate the world, not simply by new ideas and aims, but by a genuinely new life."

Yes, and I think they are in dread of a more deadening materialism still. For they come across some men of science, at any rate, who themselves would appear to be sounding the knell of anything but a mechanistic view of man and of the world. Think, for instance, of the dismal picture which Mr. Bertrand Russell paints as the outcome of scientific reflexion. "That man," he says, "is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves

and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand." If this were, in fact, the indisputable result to which the investigations of modern physical science point, there would indeed be no other foundation on which to build than that of "unyielding despair." For were man thus the "puppet" of hostile and irresistible forces, powerless "before the blind hurry of the universe from vanity to vanity," to adjure him, as Mr. Russell does, to "know these things, and to feel their passionless splendour," in order to emancipate himself from them, would wear the aspect of sheer mockery. I am not about to enter upon that discussion now. I will only say that to me it seems pure assumption to assert that from strictly scientific premisses this melancholy rendering of the nature of the universe and of human life necessarily follows. He who does so is deserting the ground of physical science and bringing speculative considerations to bear which must find either their justification or condemnation from philosophical theory. And that a materialistic theory of the kind indicated is alone compatible with the

established facts of science is certainly a claim which at the present time no one is justified in making. Why, the whole drift of recent physical research has been in exactly the opposite direction. There is hardly left nowadays a physicist of repute who would not repudiate the conceptions on which materialism has hitherto been rested. Moreover, as regards the facts of life and mind, physiologists like Professor J. S. Haldane are contending that they lead directly to the thought of God as the one ultimate and supreme reality. And it is, at all events, a noteworthy and significant circumstance that the young people of the "Jugendbewegung" will have nothing to do with a materialism that leaves no room for the reality of a spiritual world and of spiritual values.

Happy, indeed, should you be in beginning your work at a time when there is thus awakened in the minds of those who are of your own age and generation a yearning for the things of the Spirit, a passion for noble ideals, a resolve to put away make-beliefs, and to know the truth by which no man ever yet was injured. The movement of which I have been speaking is, as yet, but dimly conscious of itself; it is hardly yet aware of the direction in which it will cut for itself a channel. It has not yet crystallised into clear, definite formulæ; it is still plastic, and it presents to the critical observer much that is vague and romantic. But it is genuine, earnest and sincere; it is waiting for sympathetic leaders and the clarion call to service. I doubt whether there ever was a time when the world was more in need of the intelli-

gent, courageous guidance of strong, vigorous thinking. I am not going to repeat the stale assertion that we are living in a period of transition, because, seeing that fresh material is being perpetually added to the store-house of human knowledge and experience, every period of history is that. The transition we are concerned with, if we are to call it such, is a transition of a very unique and special kind. The immense disintegration of beliefs which the last fifty years have witnessed has left thousands of men and women stranded, with no convictions on which they can securely rely; and thousands of others clinging to traditional doctrines which are, for them, no more than empty forms, without stimulus or inspiration. More urgent every day is becoming the demand for a new synthesis of religious truths and principles that are compatible with modern thought and science. Criticism has largely done its work; now is the time for building, and the need of the time is for builders. The saviours of the coming civilisation will be the men who have thought out patiently and honestly what they have come to regard as true, who possess and are possessed by it, and can give utterance to it in terms which will induce others to thought and reflexion, and kindle within them the resolve to face the issues of life as rational minds should.

Yes, there is as much room as there ever was for the old prophetic fire of consecration, and the stern exercise of the prophet's function. I hardly know what might not happen were there to arise in our midst a man endowed with the gift of genius, who, in burning, fearless words, should

tell us the undisguised truth upon many things about which the truth is known, and force upon our sluggish consciences recognition of our duty respecting useless and effeminate luxury side by side with grinding poverty, respecting sensualism and the thirst for wealth, respecting the insipid craving after pleasure and amusement, which is often undermining the moral stamina of the rising generation, and devouring the very roots of manly and womanly independence; the truth about indifference to genuine thought, and the vapid dilettanteism that chatters about poetry and art, and the latest novelty in science or philosophy, of which it knows nothing; the truth about want of honesty in politics, and want of sincerity in religion, and about other things worse than these, which shall be nameless now. The human race has not lost its old habit of stoning those who are sent unto it; and such a man would have anything but a quiet existence. But his message would penetrate through our social conventionalities, and influence individuals in a manner well-nigh incalculable. We, alas, are for the most part but small and mediocre men, not great at all "except indeed it be some far-off touch of greatness to know we are not great." Yet we may all, even the humblest of us, rise to the height of our calling, and recognise the weight of the responsibility devolving upon us. And I would beseech you in the coming time to preach no doctrines simply because they happen to be popular, or are likely to arouse emotion, unless hard and strenuous thinking has convinced you that they are true. No temptation is more

insidious than to trifle a little with truth, to persuade oneself that it will not do to be over scrupulous if one is to gain the ear of the multitude. Such trifling is, however, never the prophet's way of winning souls; he never thus stoops to conquer. The mark of the prophet is his consuming passion for truth. Short of that you may, no doubt, achieve a measure of success, but you cannot be messengers of the divine Spirit.

Aye; but that he is such an ordained messenger is always the prophet's persuasion. It is characteristic of him that he is a seer, that he is possessed by his vision. Not so much that he has the truth as that the truth has him. Not that he has an idea, but that his idea is revealed to him, consecrates him thoroughly, uses him unsparingly, so that he is grandly sincere, single-natured, self-sacrificing. Think, for example, of the early Christian teachers. They were the disciples of one who had declared: "The words which I speak unto you are not mine, but the Father's, who sent me"; and they testified to the overwhelming force of a new trust, the vividness of a new insight, the power of a new hope. They felt themselves to be the channels of something greater than they knew, the instruments of a spiritual Life above and beyond themselves. They had not chosen the truth, the truth had chosen them; they were rather its willing servants, to whom the privilege had been accorded of carrying it forth to a waiting world. And all down the ages you will find illustrations of the same assurance. "Sing, O Goddess!" is the invocation of the blind old bard of Scio's rocky isle, who

conceived of himself as the mouthpiece of strains that came from a higher source, and took possession of his soul. "Sing, heavenly Muse!" is the sublime opening of "Paradise Lost."

> "What in me is dark,
> Illumine; what is low, raise and support;
> That to the height of this great argument
> I may assert eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men."

So, too, did Giotto feel when in Florence he revived his art by returning to the simple representations of the loves and sorrows of the human heart, and Turner in England, when he set himself to portray in a hundred scenes the glory, beauty and sublimity of nature. Thus, also, in another sense, did Newton and Darwin feel when they were unravelling the secrets of the universe, or laying bare the principles in accordance with which cosmic events take place. And what these master minds, in their respective spheres, have felt, the humblest worker in the sphere of religion ought likewise to feel, if he is to fulfil his purpose and to reveal to his fellow men the presence of the Divine. He needs beyond all else the assurance that he is but proclaiming to others that which has been entrusted to him, that he does not create the contents contemplated in his moments of deepest insight, that the thoughts which inspire him are not solely the issue of long labour on his part, but that they come to him possessed of an authoritativeness it is not in his power to bestow. Then alone will he speak with conviction,—firm, strong and penetrating, and enter upon the service of ideals, even though it

bring him little recognition, and a myriad tongues cry out in reproof.

To help men to see what is divine in nature, in art, in human thought and in human tenderness and love—therein a large part of your work will lie, and you should seek to realise that aim day by day. On the one hand, you will encounter superstition still forging chains for the intellect, bigotry still striving to silence the voice of conscience, fanaticism still casting its slur upon the free effort of the soul to bring itself into accord with the life of God. On the other hand, you will encounter scepticism and doubt, frequently honest and sincere, the result of the mind in question having wrestled with the facts of existence and found itself baffled by them, not seldom also the result of the worldliness and indifference that cares not to consider whether the object of religious trust be a myth or a reality. And between the two you will be stationed; standing as against the former for the right of free inquiry, for conscientious veracity, for the revelations of the present day; standing, as against the latter, for the reasonableness of your faith, for the veracity of your experience, for the religion of the spirit. What more than this can you desire—a life surrendered on the intellectual side to the pure attraction of the light, and on the spiritual side to the service of what is sacred, and beautiful, and good? Be not, then, timid, or hesitating, or afraid. Stand as sentinels upon the watch for every fresh intimation of the divine claims upon you, and in the service of the ideal may you find nothing to cause your souls to grow weary, or your hearts to faint.

X

THE COST OF SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

THE little College to which some of you are now bidding farewell has sought to do many things for you during the years you have been frequenting its class-rooms. It has invited you from the start to throw your minds into a group of studies, not on account of such utility as a knowledge of anatomy or physiology will be to the medical practitioner, but on account of what they are in themselves—for even the classical languages have an intrinsic value, besides being the avenues through which the treasures of human reflexion may reveal themselves, and the wealth of the spiritual world be disclosed. It has been the duty and delight of those who have guided the direction of your thought and activity to put within your grasp, to some extent, at least, the theological truth which, through the labour of centuries, the intellect of man has been enabled to attain; and, at the same time, to guard you from supposing that that truth is final or complete, to be accepted on authority and shielded as a tradition. In reference to all beliefs or opinions which are disputable or doubtful, the College has tried to be the home of free and impartial inquiry. While it has attacked no faiths that men are cherishing, or have cherished, it has prescribed

no doctrines as infallible decrees. Secure in the trust that new truth can never endanger or imperil truth already gained, it has kept its windows open to the light, and allowed you to feel what George Meredith used to call "the rapture of the forward view." And to such of you as have been eager to penetrate further and further into the great mysteries of life and death, it has said in the words of a wise old teacher and poet:—

> "Take from the past the best its toil has won,
> But learn betimes its slavish ruts to shun,
> Pass the old tree whose withered leaves are shed,
> Quit the old paths that error loved to tread;
> And a new wreath of living blossoms seek,
> A narrower pathway up a loftier peak;
> Lose not your reverence, but unmanly fear
> Leave far behind you, all who enter here!"

This has been the spirit in which the College has striven to equip its students for the mission to which they have resolved to devote themselves, and to fit them for the arduous task of being in their turn interpreters of spiritual truths for the men and women and young people in the midst of whom they will minister. Arduous I have called the task, and I imagine that at every period of Christian history it has been that. The conditions under which the vast majority of people have hitherto lived are, to say the least, but little conducive to quiet, contemplative reflexion on the ideal ends of human existence. Men who spend the greater part of their available time behind the counter, or at the desk, or on the Exchange, whose thoughts are mainly mono-

polised by the wants of customers, the concerns of clients, or the fluctuations of the market, not to mention the more laborious and tedious of occupations, require indeed a powerful stimulus to revert, even on one day in seven, to the invisible things of the Spirit, and to get down to the simple fundamental principles of conscious experience. They welcome, as all history shows, the call when it comes; and, when they hear that which touches the deeper chords of their nature, they know that they *have* wanted it; only until they *do* hear it, they know not what they want, and it needs assuredly something of the prophet's gift to strike the note that will awaken response. And, if this be true of the ages that are behind us, how much more is it true of our own age!

We are passing through a phase of social development, not indeed unprecedented in the history of civilisation, but still sufficiently momentous to give us reason to pause. An old order of things has passed away beneath our very eyes, and we hardly know as yet what to make of the new. We have come to speak of "pre-war" days as though they belonged to a remote antiquity far removed from the interests of the present. Social changes, which ordinarily would have taken years to bring about, have been introduced at a stroke, and they have meant more than the most far-sighted of men could possibly have foreseen. Mechanical science has made rapid and enormous strides; its achievements are conspicuous on every side, and they cannot be set aside or ignored. With terrific obviousness they have added to man's dominion over Nature,

and made him master of agencies too big for him as yet to control. No culture can persist without coming to terms with these altered conditions; somehow it has got to adapt itself to them. And, meanwhile, multitudes of men and women are temporarily losing touch with the things that have nothing to do with money-making and fashion and display; they are temporarily losing hold of the greatest, the loveliest and the most enduring things of thought and feeling. One consequence is that a large part of the rising generation is tending to mix up its youthful aspirations with purely selfish interests, and to dissipate its strength in a ceaseless whirl of perpetual excitement and pleasure-seeking. There is a well-known saying of Marcus Aurelius to the effect that "life is more like wrestling than dancing"; but a prevalent tendency of to-day is to reverse the dictum, and to look upon gaiety and amusement as the sole end and purpose of human existence. No sensible person would wish, of course, to disparage or abolish what Marcus Aurelius understood by "dancing"—the recreation, the play, the light-hearted pastimes of life; but when they are made, not the means of sustaining health and vigour, but *the* objects for which the serious pursuits are simply to provide opportunity, they become noxious and sickly, and undermine the very stamina of the soul.

Symptoms such as these are not, however, peculiar to the present age. Old Dr. Chalmers once spoke of what he called "the cost of moral movement," and frequently in history we come upon periods when further progress has only been

possible at the expense of at least a transitory retrogression. In Athens, for instance, in the fifth century B.C., after the success of the great war with Persia, there occurred a wonderful outburst of material prosperity, and of brilliant intellectual achievement. But careful observers like Thucydides were struck with what seemed to them a deterioration in public morality. The fact was that the body of traditional beliefs, by which the conduct of individuals had been regulated, was beginning to give way, and it took time for new ideals to gain the sanction and status of the old, so that meanwhile men were tempted to do what was right in their own eyes. So again in the middle of the eighteenth century of our era in Germany, after the success of the wars against Austria, and when the great epoch of German literature and philosophy was about to commence, we behold the rise of the so-called " Storm and Stress " movement, due to a federation of young Titans who, despising the traditional dogmas and standards of life, were dreaming of reconstructing, out of what they took to be the ruins of a decaying society, a new human world, " in conformity," as they said, " to Nature." And they were prepared to adopt almost any expedient in order to rid themselves of that which seemed to them to be thwarting personal development and stifling individual freedom.

We are witnessing phenomena very similar in our own country at the present time. We are wont to pride ourselves upon the progress that has been made in these latter days towards larger and nobler conceptions of God and duty; we have

grown accustomed to the thought that the advancing stream of knowledge and enlightenment can but elevate our faith and strengthen our assurance of eternal verities. And so, undoubtedly, I believe it will in the long run. But do we always realise the tremendous cost which well-nigh every step on the road forward entails? Are we sufficiently mindful of the thousands of distracted souls that feel themselves thus cast adrift upon a shoreless sea, because for them the former beliefs have been shattered, and they can find nothing to kindle their emotions in the new? That, surely, is no false sentimentality which clings to the institution that has stood for generations the test of time, and resisted a hundred sceptical assaults, coming to us now with the prestige of venerable authority, in which numerous successions of men and women have found spiritual sustenance and moral strength.

Your sympathies may be, as mine are, with those who are striving to bring religious conceptions into conformity with the science and philosophy of the twentieth century; but it would be a sign of shallow nature, in comparison with which even stolid philistinism would be respectable, to be indifferent to feelings such as I have tried to delineate. And they are much more prevalent than we are sometimes apt to imagine. Indeed, I might illustrate my meaning by reference to the advent of Christianity itself. We speak of the countless blessings that followed in the train of the Christian gospel. Yes; we can scarcely over-estimate them. Yet I, for one, cannot ignore the consideration that there were

those, and by no means an insignificant band, for whom the triumph of Christianity meant the very triumph of superstition. Think of the havoc created in the cities of classical antiquity, think of the "fair humanities," of the old religions being ruthlessly swept away, think of the beautiful temples of pagan worship, around which the reverence and devotion of centuries had clung, being devastated and destroyed. Some meed of recognition we may at least reserve for those who to the last stood by the ancient faith, and mourned exceedingly as the deities of Olympus faded away before the figure of the crucified Nazarene. That story, I say, is being repeated for countless individuals at the present time. These persons see one after another of the old traditional beliefs—the old notions of the infallibility of Scripture, of the Trinity, of the vicarious Atonement, of the bodily resurrection of Christ—slipping away, and even distinguished modernists of the Anglican Church discarding them; and they feel that the entire fabric of their faith is being undermined, and that their once secure anchorage is gone. And then a sense of irreparable loss supervenes, the peaceful assurance that was formerly theirs is theirs no longer. And their children, conscious of their parents' bereavement, cease to give their minds to what they vaguely surmise, if not openly avow, is a survival of superstition; and with no spiritual ideals to cherish, it is perhaps hardly surprising that the moral deterioration to which I have been referring should set in.

It is, I am persuaded, but a passing phase, though it is a very real one while it lasts, and one

with which you will be brought into frequent contact. I have, indeed, no anxiety for the basal truths of religious trust and hope, if left to the care of the free, unfettered, inquiring spirit of man. The fundamental conceptions of religion —God, Duty and Immortality—these stand on a totally different level from that of the theological accretions which have gathered round them. The human soul can spare the latter, it would be committing suicide if it surrendered the former. "Thou hast made us for thyself," declared St. Augustine, "and our souls are restless till they rest in thee." That declaration is confirmed by the circumstance that most of the greatest doubters in religion have been great believers too. If they have doubted and denied and given up, they have done so that they might believe, affirm, and take up. If they have relinquished the belief in a Trinity of three Persons in one God, it has been to replace it by the belief in myriads of persons in one God; if they have relinquished the belief in Christ's solitary sonship, it has been to replace it by the belief in the sonship of Christ and of all men; if they have relinquished a belief in atonement by the blood of Christ, it has been to replace it by his own picture of the prodigal, hastening homewards to a Father who needs no other propitiation save that of a contrite heart. And so I might proceed, showing how false it is to suppose that the religion of a rationally inquiring mind is composed of a network of negations; such a mind denies nothing that others believe save to replace it by what seems to him at all events a larger, nobler, simpler faith.

Yes, but there is a problem here, and I want you to face it with the courage of thoughtful men. And I can, perhaps, make it clear in this way. I have been reading a very striking and impressive lecture recently given by the Dean of St. Paul's to the students of one of the London medical schools. He told them that, though organised religion might be in retreat before the victorious advance of science, such was certainly not the case with the religion of the Spirit. And he tried to explain to them how they might conceive of God in a manner that would do no violence to the latest results of physical investigation.

"If," he said, "I had to picture to myself how the world may be related to its Creator, I should say that, though the innermost nature of the Supreme Being is unknown to us, He has revealed himself under the three attributes of Goodness, Truth and Beauty. These eternal and ultimate Values are not inactive thoughts; they necessarily produce an eternal world—a sphere of spaceless and timeless existence—in which they live. This is the heaven of the Christian, the intelligible (or spiritual) world of the Platonist. . . . But the divine thoughts which in heaven are fully accomplished are also Energies. By the will of the Creator they are to pass into outward expression as acts. This, we may suppose, is the purpose for which space and time, and the world in space and time, exist. . . . Such a world as we know would seem to be demanded if the thoughts of the Creator are to appear as operative energies."

And he expressed his conviction that it is an error

to say that we have no grounds for positing the existence of God outside God's relation to ourselves. Rather did it seem to him that the religious mind thrills to the words of Emily Brontë, in the wonderful poem she wrote when she was dying :—

> " With wide-embracing love
> Thy Spirit animates eternal years,
> Pervades and broods above,
> Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates and rears.
>
> Though earth and man were gone,
> And suns and universes ceased to be,
> And Thou were left alone,
> Every existence would exist in Thee."

I am not now, of course, going to discuss this suggestive representation of the nature of the Divine Being and of that Being's relation to the world. In large measure, I sympathise with what Dean Inge is here saying, and believe that what he has thus so powerfully portrayed will be the direction along which intellectual thought is destined to move in the coming time. Like a prophet of bygone days, he is predicting with clear vision the things that are to be. And with what I am about to urge I do not imagine he would have the smallest ground of complaint. I would add, however, this. When emphasis is exclusively laid upon the necessity of forming a worthy conception of the divine source of all, we are in danger of losing sight of one feature in Christianity which constitutes it, in point of fact, the greatest advance ever made in the religious development of mankind. " The divine Word," it has been said, " never is made flesh. The higher never descends to the lower. It never stoops to conquer." No state-

ment, I am convinced, could be more profoundly erroneous; and the uniqueness of the Christian gospel consists, I think, in its enforcing the exact opposite. It is, it teaches us, just Love's way to stoop to conquer. To rise, it stoops—stoops, in other words, to manifest itself, to embody itself in the garb of what is visible and tangible, so that we weak and erring mortals may recognise the grandeur of what otherwise we should never appreciate. How, indeed, otherwise, could the idea of a purely spiritual existence that dwelleth not in temples made with hands, pervading all space and transcending all time, be brought within the grasp of ordinary men and women? How can the heavenly vision shine exactly there where its presence is most needed, when it is referred to a Being so far removed from ordinary comprehension? Not only simple-minded seekers after God, but all of us, philosophers or peasants, in our hours of deepest devotion, yearn for a companion and a friend, into whose ears our aspirations and sorrows may be poured. But omnipotence, omnipresence, transcendence of space and time—these characteristics, significant and awe-inspiring though they may be, tend to overwhelm and crush rather than to entice and foster our human ideals and sympathies. In all this cold magnificence we cannot feel at home; we cannot take Immensity by the hand, we cannot feed on sublimities. Now, it was precisely this deeply-felt need that Christianity for the first time seriously attempted to meet. The Invisible and Eternal God it set before us as truly revealed in that Word of Life which human eyes had seen

and human hands had handled. No longer had men to feel as though God were too formidable a Being to obtrude upon him their insignificance or to offer him their thanksgiving or their tears. As they followed the story of that brief career of unwearied beneficence, and saw how in Christ sorrow had come across its best consoler, and penitence its just yet pitying friend, as they noted how, wherever he had gone, the cry of the heavy-laden had awaited him, and as they beheld, too, how the deeper ills of life had in him the gentlest of sympathisers, and as they observed in all his actions a calm unobtrusiveness, that courted no recognition and no applause—as they witnessed all this wealth of unalloyed goodness, their minds ascended involuntarily to that Being of whom Love must be the innermost essence, and spontaneously the confession was wrung from their lips, "Surely, the Lord of all was here." It was veritably a conviction of tremendous significance; and, although its beauty became later marred by intermixture with theological dogma, it remains, I venture to urge, a central principle of Christianity. An exhaustive representation of the Infinite nothing finite can ever be; yet of all finite manifestations of God of which we can form the dimmest notion, a perfect soul, a pure and lofty and saintly life, by this the eternal God can be mirrored as he never can be by even the most beautiful objects the material world contains. For it is only spirit that can in the deeper sense portray spirit, only mind that in the last resort can reflect the contents of mind.

Your first and foremost endeavour will be, my

friends, to reveal to men the Father, to enable them to realise the greatness and dignity of a human life that is rooted in a Mind in whom knowledge and feeling and love have their ground and source. You are well aware that there is not, and can never be, any finality in theology, so long as human thought ranges through the regions of an ever-widening experience. Truth or repose—these are the two things which, as Emerson has said, are offered to us. You may have one, but you cannot have both. And if, with Emerson, you have chosen the nobler alternative, you will not complain that the other is not yours. It will be for you rather a cause of thanksgiving that

> "The Lord has yet more light and truth
> To break forth from his word."

But, pioneers as I trust you will be of the grander revelation which the toil and labour of thought to-day are throwing open to us, you may still go forth as ambassadors of Christ, and lead men to the throne of grace through the portraiture of that great Son of Man. When Plato wished to unravel the mysteries of creation, he confessed he had no other medium of doing so than the agency of poetry and art, and our own Tennyson speaks of "truth embodied in a tale" entering into "lowly doors." Man has no purer or truer poetry than the record of Christ's life, and into "lowly doors" you will carry it, and be the harbingers of a message that will sanctify and consecrate the earthly pilgrimage of those to whom you will minister.

XI

SINCERITY IN RELIGION

We meet to-day,[1] my friends, under the shadow of a loss of which I can hardly allow myself in adequate terms to speak. It is as difficult to think of this College without Principal Evans as it would have been to think of him without the College. For well-nigh forty years his life and its life have been so intimately intertwined that I am guilty of no exaggeration when I say that, during the greater part of that period, his character and his influence, far more than any other single force, have constituted the thread which has connected, unbroken, the continuous history of this institution, and bound together successive generations of Carmarthen men. It is, indeed, a teachers' joy to "scorn delights and live laborious days" for the sake of his pupils, although I sometimes wonder whether those who come to his classroom and listen to what seems to them to be a quite ordinary lecture ever realise how much it may have cost him to prepare it for them. And that the late Principal was scrupulously careful in even the most rudimentary portions of his work to give of his best, and to lead those he had to guide along the least tedious and winding path

[1] June 16th, 1927.

he could discover, there can be no manner of question. But the subtle power of his personality depended upon something deeper—upon something which it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe, and still more to explain. There was in him a union rarely to be met of worldly sagacity, of what we call common sense and what the Greeks called φρόνησις, with the most transparent simplicity of soul; strict regard for truth and justice with a delicate kindliness that seemed to flow from his very presence and to light up his countenance. After his death, I had letters from several of his old students, and one of the most distinguished of them who, on leaving Carmarthen, had studied in Oxford, in Germany, and in Paris, wrote "it has been my privilege to sit at the feet of many inspiring teachers, but not one of them has incited in me quite the same feeling of attachment and devotion as Walter Evans." He was, indeed, a scholar of wide and varied attainments, of precise and accurate learning, as his book on *Alliteration in Latin Verse* is, in itself, sufficient to show. His love of the masterpieces of classical antiquity—of Horace and Virgil, of Homer and Sophocles, who now, after the lapse of centuries, still "like giants stand, to sentinel enchanted land"—was intense, and his face would brighten with almost boyish exuberance when he was conversing about some favourite passage or pointing out the beauty of some choice phrase. He would worthily have filled a chair in any University centre of learning. Yet his modesty, his self-effacement, was no less clearly marked than his

loyalty to principle and his open-minded sincerity. He never put himself forward; he was content with this secluded sphere of labour, and he threw into it all the thought and care and vigilance he might well have expended in some more conspicuous field of activity. This humble little institution, screened as it were from the glare of publicity by the hills around, seemed to accord fittingly with his retiring disposition, and he found true and abiding happiness in directing its course and in winning, as he could not but win, the esteem and affection of its yearly relays of students.

There were some, I believe, who, when he was chosen in 1888 to succeed Dr. Vance Smith, looked upon the appointment with apprehension and misgiving. For, although he had been one of Vance Smith's ablest pupils, he had not entered the ministry, and it was thought that he was, therefore, not suited to be Principal of a theological college. A more mistaken and erroneous judgment was never formed. It has been, on the contrary, a source of real strength to this College, and given to it a distinctive character, that for forty years it has had at its head a layman, whose vision was more far-reaching than that of some ministers, at least, is apt to be. For Principal Evans's interests were wide and comprehensive; and he brought his students into touch with the larger world of thought and culture outside the comparatively narrow range of a strictly theological curriculum. He saved them from the deadening provincialism of what Matthew Arnold

once called, " hole-and-corner forms of religion." But he was essentially and in the best and highest sense of the term a devoutly religious man. Gradually, and by earnest wrestling with the facts of experience, he had reached clear and definite religious principles; and with conscientious fidelity he regulated his life and his activity in accordance with them. Those principles were few and fundamental, for he never professed to see further than the dry light of reason could carry him; but his conviction of the divineness of the world and of the goodness of the power that rules it was firm and unshakable. It was the calm, serene and quiet confidence of a man who had won his way through intellectual effort to repose on the simple deliverances and trusts of the human soul. More than once he spoke to me of the faith that was in him; and only a year ago he said with cheerful assurance in one of our conversations, " I shall soon solve the problem we are all of us longing here to solve." Nor did he, unobtrusive man though he was, live the life of the recluse. As a member of the Borough Council, as a Justice of the Peace, and in various other capacities, he served the town in which practically the whole of his life was spent; and, as the Mayor said, in his graceful reference to him last February, " brought honour to it." In politics, he may be said to have been an idealist in aim and an optimist by temperament. He had an unquenchable belief in the cause of social reform, in increasing the bounds of individual liberty; and, even on the verge of old age, he was not ashamed to see

visions and to dream dreams. And in educational matters his judgment was invariably well-balanced, sane, and on the side of steady progress. In the formation of the University of Wales he took a leading part; and, after its formation, he served the University in numerous ways and was for some time Dean of its Theological Faculty. No one could have attended with him the meetings of the Theological Board without realising how frequently his advice was sought or the deference that was paid to it when it was obtained. His was, indeed, a life crowded with occupations, and yet he was ever ready to give the best hours of the day to help and to advise those who appealed to him for aid. Of no one can it be more truly said that he lived for the sake of his work. Never for one moment did he shirk any duty to this College as its Principal; and you, who have been his final band of students, have witnessed how courageously to the end he laboured on, awaiting, with untroubled equanimity, the call which he knew was soon to come. It was a spectacle, that, which will never cease to be an inspiration to you through the coming time.

And I would fain, if I dare, lay my poor personal tribute of affection on a dear friend's grave. Ever since, some thirty years ago, as a young and untried man, I first visited Carmarthen, his genial welcome, his unfailing considerateness, his generous appreciation of all one's small efforts to further this work, have been year by year treasured memories, that have only deepened as time went on. In former days, when we were both ener-

getic and vigorous, I have wandered with him over most of his own Welsh hills, and he with me over the hills of Shropshire that perhaps I may venture to call mine; and we have thus shared one another's thoughts and feelings in a manner that would scarcely otherwise have been possible. Year by year, too, I have spent peaceful and happy hours with him and those he loved in his beautiful home; and, always ready to be helpful where he thought his help could avail, once, at least, he hastened down to mine, when it was plunged in a great sorrow. Indeed, as I glance back now over the whole period of our friendship, I can think of no single word of his that I could wish had been unsaid, of no single action that I could wish had been undone. And I am grateful that my last day with him was a memorable close to our earthly companionship. I can picture him, as we were walking leisurely along, twelve months ago, facing the glorious sea at Gwbert, with the sun's rays playing upon it, and recall how bright and gladsome he was, how, even in his infirmity, his joy in the beauties of nature and his interest in the affairs of men were undimmed, and how his talk was still lighted up by flashes of wit and anecdote and by that mellow wisdom that was so peculiarly his own.

He has left us; but we may well associate him with the company of those whom Virgil, in those great lines of the *Georgics* which he must often have pondered over with his students, describes as wending their wondrous way over the Elysian plains,

"Then, since from God these lesser lives began
And eager spirits entered into man,
To God again the enfranchised soul must tend,
He is her home, her Author is her End;
No death is hers; when earthly eyes grow dim
Starlike she soars, and God-like lives with Him."

For those of you who are leaving the College and entering upon the work for which you have been preparing, I can render no more timely service than of having thus attempted to delineate some traits of the personality of him you have all known and loved. For the departure from us of a completed life like his imposes a new commission upon the incomplete ones that are yet upon the field; bids them pick up the dropped armour of moral and spiritual enterprise and take upon themselves the tasks thus consigned to them. No more beautiful embodiment of high-minded Christian devotion can I hope to set before you than that of which I have just been speaking; and, under the inspiration of that example, you may indeed go forth, encouraged and fortified to face the calls of duty in the spheres that will be entrusted to your care. But this may be the last opportunity I shall have of addressing you; and, in the hope that I may still further portray the spirit of his life, I will add a few words to what I have already said.

As you stand to-day at the parting of the ways, and survey the time you have spent in the College class-rooms, you cannot but ask yourselves what it is that you are carrying away with you as the fruit of all these years. At the outset you came

here impelled by the resolve to become the harbingers of divine things to the busy, toiling and often unawakened men and women around you, to be the bearers to them of a gospel that would shield them from the evils of the world and bring into the range of their experience spiritual truths that would dignify and sweeten their lives. Probably you came to this place with only a vague consciousness, an *Ahnung*, as the Germans would say, of the actual purport of that gospel, knowing only sufficient about it to realise that it was replete with glad tidings of promise and hope, and as such an instrument of power, but expecting here to gain complete acquaintance with its contents and at length to go forth with full-stored minds and well-trained tongues, as mental athletes for the great campaign. And to some slight extent doubtless your anticipations have been fulfilled. By the simultaneous study of three ancient literatures you have been brought into touch with the several sources of our modern civilisation and have discovered how much it owes to them all. You have contemplated the age and scene of the advent of the religion you mean to inculcate; and you have followed, so far as the existing records enable you to follow, the story of the life of its founder and of his wondrous mission of revealing God to the humblest souls. You have traced, too, the strange process that ensued of spoiling the essence of Christianity by amalgamating it with dogmas that were foreign to it, and you have seen how a personal and spiritual faith became transformed into a sacra-

mental and priestly system. And, finally, you have not been left without guidance in thinking over again the thoughts of those who have sought to unravel the ultimate mysteries of existence; and you can discern now, on looking round, whether you are catching the accents of Plato in the Academy or those of Berkeley in his quiet retreat on Rhode Island. Yes; but, unlike some seminaries whose function it is to fashion theologians according to one pattern, and to supply them with all the lore they need, this College has provided you with no body of doctrines, authoritative, infallible and final; it has candidly informed you that it has none such to impart, and that it cannot recognise the claims of those who maintain they have. Its teachers have tried to distinguish for you, so far as history is concerned, what they take to be fact from what they take to be fiction; and, so far as beliefs and opinions are concerned, they have indicated where, according to their best judgment, the truth would seem to lie. But they have impressed upon you that, in regard to religious principles, it is your own thought, your own reflexion, that must in the long run decide for you the issues; and that if you are to become real emissaries of a spiritual gospel it will be because you have, by honest intellectual effort, made it part of your own inner life. You must speak of that which you do know and testify of that which you have seen.

Now, one consideration I wish to suggest is that this would seem to be in accordance with the method by which what Lessing

called the "education of the human race" has come about. Here we men and women are, stationed in the midst of a vast and stupendous universe, every item of which is calculated to awaken wonder and to elicit the sense of mystery, but which stubbornly refuses to disclose its meaning except to the watchful and inquiring mind. It is conceivable, I suppose, that this might have been completely otherwise—that the inner essence and significance of things might have been so written on their very surface as to be transparent to the merest glance of discernment, needing for deciphering them no more exertion than is involved in the opening of the eye to the solar beams. There is nothing, I take it, incredible in the supposition that a full and exhaustive revelation of life's meaning might have been vouchsafed to each of us from the outset, that the secret of nature might have been unveiled before us as an open book, so that he who runs might read. But it is not so; and the very fact that the truth is not thus blazoned forth, with self-evident clearness and vividness, ought to add emphasis to the Christian doctrine of the inherent greatness and dignity of man. For that doctrine implies at least this—that thinking human minds have the power not only of receiving but of acquiring truth, that they are subject to no constraint, that they are free, free with well-nigh unlimited capacities of finding out for themselves the reality of things and of attuning their lives thereto, but free also to wander among the semblances and to create, through their perverse

interpretations, jarring discord in the world. How could the love of truth be tested, how could its sacredness be realised, were it no less accessible and inevitable to the careless and the superficial than to the earnest and impartial inquirer? To appreciate its value, a man must seek it in order to find it; were it forced upon him by the might of Omnipotence, he might be God's slave, he could never become God's fellow-worker. Let us, then, rejoice in rather than lament the fact that an infallible revelation has been withheld from us, that it is to strenuous effort and conscientious striving that genuine visions alone come.

But when, through such effort and striving, they *do* come to you, resolve, at all costs, to be faithful to them. And that you will find to be no light matter. There is so much in social life that makes sincerity hard, so often a little admixture of deception and falsehood increases tremendously a man's prospect of success, as the world counts success, that often in the entangled net of circumstances and associations he may find himself tied hands and feet to some habit of make-belief before he is aware of it. It was in view of this fact that Carlyle made sincerity the fundamental condition of what he called heroism. "I should say," he declared, "that sincerity—a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic." If that be so, we can at least add that the first characteristic of heroes and the first characteristic of men who can hope to really influence their fellows as

religious leaders is one and the same. And in saying this, I have in mind an unconscious, unrealised insincerity to which most of us are liable, and from which the religious teacher needs, with vigilance, to guard himself. It is so easy to slip into using conventional phraseology, simply because it is expedient and likely to be effective. It is so tempting to refrain from giving utterance to what you have come to see is true, simply from fear of hurting the susceptibilities of those who cling to the customary beliefs. I sometimes wonder, for example, what would happen if, say, next Sunday, every minister of religion throughout the length and breadth of the land were to proclaim without disguise and without reservation his own personal convictions on certain of the current dogmas of theology. Probably, the following week a religious revolution would occur in Britain more thorough and radical than any we have so far experienced. Yet a thousand unhappy hindrances stand in the way—traditional beliefs, established customs, social prejudices, ecclesiastical respectabilities—these and such as these set a premium upon intellectual unveracity, and too often paralyse the lips of men who should be vicegerents of the truth of God. And this state of things acts and reacts upon the whole of our social structure, upon those engaged in politics, in law, in commerce, in business, in almost all the varied employments in which men and women are engaged. For if convenient subterfuge be tolerated in the most sacred of human relations, who would venture to throw

stones at those who have recourse to it in the less serious concerns of life? There is no more urgent need at the present time than a revival of the sense of the sacredness of truth in every human occupation. Wherever almost you look, you will find that what social life is crying out for to-day is sincerity, the sincerity of those who in Milton's words, toil as ever in the great Task-master's eye. What is imperatively called for is the sincerity of men who go to their occupations with something of the religious feeling of the old Cathedral builders in what we are pleased to call the Dark Ages, who carved with careful fidelity the farthest statues on the highest pinnacles of Gothic erections, and were as painstaking in the tracery of leaf and flower along the upper and scarce visible arches and lines of their great forests in stone as they were in the ornamentation of that which every passer-by would note. What beyond all else is requisite is the sincerity that animated in ancient Athens the soul of Pheidias, who designed its noble temple. Working at an immense height which no human eye from below could reach, he was as conscientious over the tiniest details there as though he were carving a figure for the entrance. "Why do you take all that trouble?" he was once asked. "No man will see your work." "No," was his reply, "no, but the gods will." I think it is sincerity of that kind that the religious teacher above all requires to cultivate and to practise, if the message he has to deliver is to be in reality a message of spiritual strength and power. And you who have

been accustomed here to seek the truth with free and unbiased minds, who have been bound by no creeds and fettered by no articles, even unwritten ones—you may well resolve to be the pioneers of resolute and genuine sincerity, and so to serve him who left us as his watchword the great dictum that the truth would make us free.

It is, I believe, only to a mind thus inured to sincerity in feeling, in thought and in action, that there can ever come that assurance of certainty, that sense of security, which so large a number of persons seek to obtain through acknowledgment of external authority. I have said that in his dealings with us the divine author of our being has subjected us to no constraint in regard to recognising the meaning of life and the principles of rationality embodied in the ways of nature. He has ordained that we shall gradually come to a knowledge of these by dint of our own endeavour, by finding out for ourselves the underlying ideas which the infinity of detail in the world around us is exemplifying. Yes; but while to imagine God propelling us by external force to grasp the truth of things is as ridiculous as it would be to imagine a stone being induced to move by persuasive argument or a metal being melted by love, there is nevertheless another sense in which the infinite Mind can and does influence the finite mind, and yet in doing so leaves it in full possession of its individual liberty and freedom. If there be one thing to which human experience bears witness more positively than to another, it is that, when once we have embarked upon the

quest of truth and are faithfully pursuing that quest, we are not our own masters in regard to what we shall find. Not merely in respect to religious knowledge but equally in respect to all knowledge, we come to discern that we are in the presence of a Power, or rather of an Intelligence, exerting over our intelligences a dominion which we cannot gainsay. Think, for instance, of the mental attitude of the scientific investigator, engaged in interpreting the facts of nature. Is he simply the master of his own lines of reflexion, the creator and originator of the whole mental process that is taking place within him? When he is following some obscure phenomenon in the natural world, is not the mind of the physicist moving, during every step of the process, at the call of a Power, an Intelligence, that is not his own, and which discloses to him thoughts, laws, sequences, he can neither make nor unmake, nor in the slightest measure modify—a supreme Reason which overrides and suppresses his merely individual fancies and notions? Is it not as though the thoughts he is thinking were descending upon him from a boundless realm of reality, and as though it were only as he opens his mind to receive them, and dismisses all self-assertion, that he becomes, so to speak, the organ of an Intelligence vastly transcending his own—only, in a word, because he is intellectually born from above that he can enter into the kingdom of truth? "Oh, God!" exclaimed Newton, when the law of gravitation had become clear to him, "I am thinking thy thoughts after Thee." And

so, too, is it in the case of what it is usual to call the inspirations of genius. When, in the ecstasy of imaginative creation, a vision of beauty captivates the soul of the artist or the poet, is he not willing to acknowledge that, in his best and loftiest moments, he seemed to himself to be but catching glimpses of a realm of indescribable loveliness stretching illimitably beyond him? And precisely the same thing holds in regard to the moral life of any one of us. If you are conscious of an imperative duty devolving upon you, if you feel *obliged* to act in the manner which you are convinced is right, can you explain or account for that obligation, that imperative, as a feature that has somehow originated from your own mind, or your act of obeying it as the mere following out of your own inclination and desire? No; of what you are, in fact, immediately persuaded, when you thus stand before the tribunal of the moral judgment, is that the constraint is put upon you and is not of your making, that it comes as the verdict of a Mind entitled as yours is not to prescribe authoritatively the way you *ought* to act and the course you *ought* to pursue.

So, it seems to me, God is perpetually revealing Himself. The Spirit of Truth exerts over the human spirit the power it does because it elicits and appeals to an intelligence that is of kindred nature with itself; the light within responds, as Plato would have said, to the light without. There is thus no lack of divine revelation. From the dawn of history, God has been revealing himself to men through the order and rationality and

beauty of the outward world, through the natural affections, and through the moral behests that are laid upon us all. In discerning order, harmony, beauty, truth, we *are* discerning God; in living the life of love and goodness we *are* participating in His life. From nature to man, and from man to that great "son of man," by whom the ideal of human life was realised, it has been one perpetual revelation of the constructive Intelligence upon whom finite intelligences depend.

May it be your privilege, by an inward sincerity and earnestness, such as were his on whom to-day our thoughts are centred, to become the means of enabling your fellow-beings to grasp the essence of this revelation, and to realise the grandeur of the inheritance in which as human souls they are permitted to share. And when, at length, your work on earth is done, and the hour has arrived for you to face another parting, may men be able to speak of each of you, as they can now of him, as one

> "Untired in charity, of cheer serene,
> Careless of gold, or breath of praise to earn,
> Childhood or manhood's ear content to win,
> And still as glad to teach as meek to learn."

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